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HITLER'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT

HITLER'S decision to declare himself Commander-in-Chief of the German Forces follows an open admission of the failure of the German campaign in Russia. For some time there have been signs of tension between the Army Headquarters and the Headquarters of Hitler's personal staff. It will be recalled that the Führer took personal responsibility for the decision to launch the final and disastrous assault on Moscow. A fortnight ago we heard that he had retired to Berchtesgaden in search of a much needed rest. A carpet-biting rest, following the failure in Russia and a quarrel with his generals as a prelude to a new and far-reaching decision—that would be in accordance with past experience of the Führer's psychology. Last Saturday our best hopes were confirmed by a strange pronouncement put forward by Dr. Goebbels on behalf of the Führer. It would be hard to think of a more severe blow at the morale of the German people, who had been told only a few weeks ago that victory in Russia was assured, than a bald statement that Germany is inferior to the U.S.S.R. both in men and material, and that positional warfare must now take the place of the offensive. Further, they were asked to provide warm clothing of all descriptions for their freezing army in Russia, though, as the message admits, they have already given all the warm clothing they could spare. On top of this comes Hitler's decision to promote himself as Commander-in-Chief instead of General von Brauchitsch.

By this step Hitler attempts to assure his position both by calling to his aid all the mystique of his personality and achievements and by finally liquidating those elements in the Army which had never been completely Nazified. Hitler's appeal as a common soldier who suffered the miseries of the last war and who knows the sufferings of soldiers in this war, may still have its effect on Germans who forget that Hitler was largely responsible for starting this war. But the response of the German public is no longer automatic. We are far from prophesying a speedy breakdown in Germany; we write with our fingers crossed and a strong determination not to cook our Nazi hares before they are caught. Hitler's decisions may include the use of the *Luftwaffe* for the occupation of Tunis; his plans may be ready to overrun other countries or to invade this one. We note the good example of caution set by the Moscow wireless. All we see clearly is the arrival of the moment of hope which we have always looked for—the moment when the invincible German Army is in retreat (both in Russia and Libya); when the divisions in the High Command have been as patent as the appalling nature of the casualties; when the appeal to the people is no longer for steadiness in assured victory, but for the uttermost endurance in face of a foe more powerful than themselves. Here is the opportunity for political warfare. If at this crisis the only voice that reaches the ordinary German from the enemy's camp is the threat of annihilation and of national dismemberment, and if he hears nothing to assure him that a distinction is to be made between the common people of Germany and the Nazi gang who have misled and betrayed them, then, indeed, the whole German people may have to pay and fight a long and desperate battle. The length of the war and the future of Europe may depend on what the Allied Governments now say in their propaganda.

In the last war the simple appeal of President Wilson's Fourteen Points certainly shortened the fighting. The vague points of the Atlantic Charter, with their contradiction between the promise of freedom from want and of the restoration of the petty sovereignties of Europe, is no substitute. Moreover, there is the difficulty of combining British, American and Soviet propaganda. Whether the Allied countries mean eventually to march their armies to Berlin, to limit spheres of influence or to head a federation—in any of these cases there is every reason to offer those Germans who throw off Nazi rule some alternative to destruction. Various groups have to be considered. There are workers in the factories who, we believe, will prove increasingly restive as the winter wears on; there is the vocal resistance of the Catholic, and to a lesser degree of the Protestant leaders; there is the possible Army revolt if Hitler, who has now taken the responsibility, fails to retrieve the situation in Russia. Agreement as to propaganda should be reached, if possible, between Britain, Russia and America, and if possible a joint Christmas or New Year message to the German people from Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt would seem peculiarly suitable and desirable. We believe that the proper substance of that message, which has in theory been agreed upon by all parties in the Atlantic Charter, is that once steps have been taken to liquidate Hitlerite Germany, once the Nazi leaders are overthrown and the German war machine disrupted, we promise to the German people as individuals food, employment and security, and to them as Germans a self-respecting life within the European family.

The Home Front. *By an Industrial Correspondent*

The Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain has decided to put before the Government a demand for the immediate nationalisation of the coal mines. This is its reply to the statement in the production debate that any reasoned case for public ownership in the interests of the war effort will be considered on its merits. That this will, in fact, happen is very difficult to believe. The Conservative Head Office and the Conservative back-bench Members are very much on the alert to ensure that the political truce shall be interpreted as meaning that the war is to be fought to the end under capitalism, and that there is to be no interference with long-term property rights, however much interference there may have to be with the rights of labour. But I am glad the Mineworkers' Federation is proceeding with its claim in defiance of this attitude; for the coal miners furnish about the clearest case of all (except perhaps the land) in favour of national ownership as an immediate wartime need. The division of the mining industry between large and small concerns, between independent mining concerns and mines

tied to the steel producers or to other industrial interests, and between high-cost and low-cost concerns leads to all manner of difficulties even in ordinary times. The irrational distribution of surface ownerships, which leads to an irrational distribution of colliery properties beneath the surface, is inconvenient enough in time of peace, but becomes much more so in wartime, when it is necessary to apply every possible economy in the use of man-power. The need to give each separate colliery concern the chance of working at a profit results in an uneconomic distribution of man-power and in unnecessary transport complication. The State needs power to concentrate production upon pits which are best placed for the getting of a high output in relation to the labour employed, and for moving their coal to market with the least possible strain on railway and other transport facilities. The persons whose advice is valuable in organising coal production under the existing conditions are not the colliery owners as such, but the best available experts in modern mining methods and in matters of transport and distribution. A nationalised coal industry could produce and distribute more coal with much less effort than is needed while the job has to be tackled through a host of separate colliery concerns of all sorts and sizes; nor is there any doubt that the miners would work better and more cheerfully if they felt that their industry was being carried on directly for the State, and not for private profit, present or future. In fact, the miners have the clearest case of all for wartime socialisation; and I hope they will publish it as well as press it privately on the Cabinet and on the Labour Ministers.

* * *

In addition to demanding nationalisation, the miners are pressing for the "closed shop," on much the same lines as the C.I.O. has been pressing for it in the United States. In particular, they are demanding that non-unionists shall be excluded from the benefit of wage concessions negotiated by their Federation, on the ground that a man who refuses to pay his share of the costs of collective bargaining has no valid claim to participate in its advantages. This demand is not new: it was actually granted during the last war, when all mine workers were compelled under the Defence of the Realm Act to be trade unionists. It is a complication in this war that workers subject to the Essential Work Order are legally guaranteed the rates applicable to their jobs, irrespective of trade union membership; and it is said that a number of miners have been using this fact as a pretext for not paying their trade union contributions. In some of the coalfields the owners have already agreed to collaborate with the Miners' Unions in doing what they can to generalise Trade Unionism. But in other areas the owners are refusing to interfere; and feeling against non-unionists is beginning to run high. I confess that I have an instinctive dislike of compulsory Trade Unionism; but I can quite understand the attitude of the trade unionists. The "conscientious objector" to Trade Unionism (there are a few who take a stand against it on religious grounds) is best left alone. But there is nothing respectable about the "expert" member who refuses to pay simply because he can rely on getting any concessions won by the Mineworkers' Federation extended to him automatically under the Essential Work Order.

* * *

In the Clyde shipyards, a beginning is being made with the organisation of joint committees for the stimulation of higher output. Employers are gradually learning that, if they want the full co-operation of the workers, they will have to get it by showing their willingness to recognise the claim of their employees to participate in measures of workshop and factory control. The sooner a similar recognition is given to workshop organisation in other shipyard centres and in the engineering industry, the sooner will the workshop movement be made into an effective instrument for increasing production. As long as the shop stewards are left without adequate recognition, both from the managements of the various firms and from the Trade Unions, their efforts will inevitably fail to produce their full effect on output, and the shop stewards' movement will be led to concern itself more with "grievances" than with the means of promoting better workshop organisation. Whenever the experiment of joint committees has been tried, and the committees have been armed with adequate powers, the results seem to have been good. The time is approaching when it will be necessary for the Ministry of Labour to insist on a formal recognition of workshop committees in all large factories, and for the Trade Unions concerned to give shop stewards a much fuller measure of recognition. The official Trade Union leadership is apt to frown on these developments of workshop organisation, partly out of fear that they may be under "Communist" influence, and partly because workshop bargaining may cut across the regulation laid down by national or local collective bargains. But Trade Unionism is meant to be a means of expression, and not a strait jacket for the workmen; and if official Trade Unionism tries to stand in the way of those forms of organisation which best provide for the free expression of the aspirations of the active minority in the workshops, it will lose its chance of increasing its hold, and fail, as Labour politicians have largely failed, to put itself at the head of the rising working-class consciousness arising out of the conditions of war.

* * *

Mr. Francis Meynell, who from his point of vantage in the Board of Trade ought to know, tells us that bachelors have been the heaviest consumers of clothes coupons, and that it is a fallacy that women have, in general, borrowed coupons from their menfolk, or parents used their coupons on their children's behalf. I can write as a mere man who has not so far made use of a single coupon on his own behalf; and I confess to some surprise. I am not at all surprised to learn that well-to-do parents have been hard put to it to comply with the absurd demands of the public schools for a continuance of their peacetime standards of school outfitting, or that typists and other office workers have made much heavier purchases of clothing than the general run of housewives. On the whole, the experience of the first 19 weeks of the rationing scheme shows remarkably even distribution of purchases among the various classes of consumers, and rebounds to the credit of those who worked out the scheme.

A Restive House. *By a Parliamentary Correspondent.*

The public has no notion of the speed with which the revolt is developing in the House of Commons. Following the revolt of forty (mainly Labour) Members against the compulsion of man-power without conscribing or controlling property, comes a Conservative revolt on the score of the mishandling of the Navy and our lack of preparations in the Pacific. As a result, when the Government proposed to send the House away for a lengthy Christmas recess dissatisfaction came to a head. Shinwell proposed a substantial reduction in the holiday. This was immediately supported by Wardlaw Milne, Hore-Belisha, Sir William Davison, Erskine Hill and Commander Bower. Erskine Hill's support of Shinwell was a clear warning to the Government because he is Chairman of all the important Conservative 1922 Committees. Attlee had to agree to the shorter recess. Though the Government has power to recall the House at any moment, the House would not trust it enough to allow any length of time to go by without meeting. The Government plunged deeper into the mire at the end of the sitting, when the banning of Mr. Gibbs' broadcast on Regulation 18B was raised by Percy Harris, the Liberal Whip. So deeply concerned was the House that the discussion extended nearly three hours beyond the normal time for adjournment. Winterton stated the matter would again be raised after the Christmas recess on a motion to reduce the salary of the Minister of Information.

The Malaya situation has upset the most staunch supporters of the Government. Whether the Prime Minister can again pull his administration together without completely reconstructing it is open to doubt.

Changes in the Labour Party

The death of Mr. H. B. Lees-Smith deprives the Labour Party of an experienced and capable Parliamentarian, whose mind was singularly adapted to the wartime task of leading an official opposition with the duty rather of criticising discreetly than of opposing. Mr. Lees-Smith was a Liberal M.P. in the Asquith administration before the last war; he was an expert on Parliamentary procedure and seemed at one time likely to become Speaker of the House. He had been President of the Board of Education and Postmaster-General. He was a lecturer at the London School of Economics, and was at one time on the Board of Directors of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. His death and that of Mr. F. Lee, and the translation of four other Labour M.P.s to the House of Lords, means that six Labour seats fall vacant. The choice of men to fill these seats will reveal more about the Labour Party; is Transport House capable of using these seats for some of the more alive candidates or must these seats be occupied by hack politicians?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

With the New Year we are confronted with a further cut in our paper ration and we again prefer to maintain our circulation (45,000) at the expense of a small reduction in size. In order to save every millimetre of paper we are cutting the length of our page by about an inch, and at the same time arranging to fill the available type area to the technical limit. In this way we should be able to preserve circulation without sacrificing more than a small quantity of editorial matter.

Gift Subscriptions

Nearly twenty years ago the former Editor of this paper bet the Manager that a specially reduced Christmas Gift Subscription would not bring in one hundred new readers. The Manager won hands down for in a fortnight the response was five hundred. Since then our Christmas and New Year Gift Subscription has grown enormously in popularity, and it is with real regret that we are forced to announce that this year paper shortage makes it impossible for us to renew this offer. All we can do is to offer gift subscriptions at the ordinary rates, giving priority to overseas friends, on the understanding that we will start new subscriptions as soon as we have copies available and in rotation as they are received. The Three Months Postal Subscription costs 8*s.* 6*d.*, Six Months 16*s.* 3*d.*, or a Year 32*s.* 6*d.*

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.

POSTAGE on this issue is: Inland, 1½d.; Foreign, 1d.; Canada, 1d.

MUDDLE IN THE PACIFIC

THE victories in Russia and Libya make it easier to think and write objectively about the Pacific without the risk of causing "alarm and despondency." The plain fact is that, with much less excuse than the Americans, Britain in the Far East was no better prepared. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill are now presumably discussing in Washington the causes and cure of this joint failure. The Americans may have supposed that they could indefinitely stave off war, and that the choice between coming in and staying out lay with them. The British had no such illusion. The despatch of our two lost battleships to these seas and of troops to Singapore, with the decision to defend Hong-Kong, meant that we were preparing for war in so far as our limited means permitted. Unfortunately, our preparations reveal a hardly credible ignorance, complacency and incompetence. Our staffs of all three arms underestimated the quality of the Japanese military machine almost as stupidly as they had despised the Red Army. Our diplomatic and consular intelligence can have been no better, for apparently it was the official belief in Singapore that the Thais (Siamese) would resist a Japanese occupation. No less defective were our contacts with the Chinese. When the decision to defend Hong-Kong was taken, it surely was obvious that the island could be held only if we could retain Kowloon, on the mainland across the narrow strait. Kowloon, in its turn, could be hopefully defended only with Chinese help. It now turns out that Kowloon was never seriously fortified, and military conversations with the Chinese were hastily attempted only after it had been evacuated and the island as good as lost.

On Singapore through more than a decade we had lavished our millions and our engineering science in the belief that we had in it an impregnable fortress. Our thinking about it was governed by an obsolete conception of sea-power. The danger from the land and from the air were never seriously faced—not even after the lessons which Norway and Crete should have taught us. No thought had been given to the land defences of the outlying airfields in the Malay Peninsula and in Southern Burma, nor yet to the railway through Thailand which was allowed to fall into Japanese use without an attempt to wreck it. To this incompetence we owe first the loss of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*, and secondly of Penang. The Japanese can now dominate the Straits of Malacca with bombers and submarines, and Rangoon itself is threatened, which means that the Burma Road is in danger at its maritime end. It is permissible to hope that Singapore can still hold out as an isolated fortress. But in the meantime its significance in our strategical plan has largely disappeared. It can no longer keep open the short sea-road to India and Burma by which American and Australian supplies should travel. Neither can it defend the rubber plantations and tin mines, which may now have passed from us to the Japanese.

At this point we face something even more unpleasant than incompetence. No one will complain that Penang was deliberately evacuated while there was time to withdraw its White inhabitants. But reports insist that its docks and its electric power station were left intact for the enemy's use, and subsequent denials only cover half the charges. What happened at Kowloon, where the bigger part of the Hong-Kong docks and airfields are situated? Were they totally destroyed? In all this we face a failure so general that the inadequacy of this man or the other cannot account for it. A ruling class was on its trial, and here, as in Norway and Crete, it has broken down. A national tradition has for generations discouraged intelligence and science to concentrate on sports and what it calls "character." Here is the result. History may decide that the kind of character that led the Russians to scorch their earth and blow up their Dnieperstroi dam has the higher survival value. Something, indeed, is amiss in our capitalist societies, French and American, as well as British.

Everyone realises that whatever happens in Europe and Africa, we face a long and difficult struggle in the Pacific. Our best chance is to make full use of China's man-power. Her interior, if we could supply modern weapons and a small force of gunners, airmen and tank crews to supplement the good Chinese infantry, may be the key to the defence of India, the Dutch islands and Australia. Our other urgent need is a base, and Russia has it in Vladivostok. Whether on the delicate balance of pros and cons the allied cause as a whole would be best served by burdening Russia with a second front we do not pretend to judge. That is a problem for the Allied Council of War now in process of creation. Russia's own attitude may be determined by Stalin's judgment of the quality of Anglo-American plans for meeting the Axis on other fronts.

"A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE"

OFFICIAL recognition by the Government that the only way by which married women with domestic responsibilities can contribute directly to the war effort is by part time work, if belated, is very welcome. The only reason why it has not been realised sooner must be that most employers are men, and that men direct the policy of the Ministry of Labour. They have shown themselves surprisingly ignorant of what goes on day by day, year by year, in the homes of the country.

The mother does not, like people who go to an office or a works every day, perform one, but a multitude of tasks, some of which are carried on simultaneously. For instance, she watches over the baby whilst she is busy with the house cleaning, cooking, or weekly wash. She takes the baby and toddler with her when she does her shopping, or when she takes the five or six-year-old to and from school, if there are no older children to whom the younger ones can be entrusted. She watches over the schoolchildren when they return from school whilst she is doing mending or sewing or putting the baby to bed. She and the children have their evening meal together with sometimes the earning members of the family, or, if their return is too late, the mother prepares a meal for them whilst keeping an eye on the children, either playing or going to bed.

Now if a mother is sent into full time work away from home, all these jobs have to be parcelled out amongst a number of other women. A day nursery is required for the babies and toddlers where one full-time woman is needed to look after four to five children. Even so, the children have to be wakened, dressed and taken out into the cold winter mornings at 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. by their mother, who may have to be at work by 7.30 a.m. or 8 a.m. The school children must have their midday dinner at school, and although this policy is urged by the Ministry of Food for other reasons than that of help to women on war work, it also means the employment of women to cook the meals and the use of transport and labour to take them from the central kitchen to the schools or other feeding centres. More women have to be employed there to serve and wash up.

A demand is now being made for shops to be open for a limited time on Sundays which, if granted, will mean an increased staff of shop assistants. The weekly wash, formerly done at home, has to be put out and this means an increase of employment in laundries, or else the services of a neighbour. If, as is often the case, there is a husband who is a reserved worker, he expects a hot meal when he gets home. In many cases he finds that he must either get his evening meal at the works canteen or go out again to a British restaurant—if there is one near to his house. Extra meals at both these places mean the employment of extra women. The weekly cleaning of the house and the necessary mending may be done by another neighbour, but is most likely done by the mother herself at the end of a full week at the factory, and she also has to see to any daily tidying that is absolutely necessary. This extra work combined with long hours of work will inevitably affect her health after a time.

There still remains the care of the schoolchildren before and after school, and their breakfasts and teas. A demand is now being made that the Education Authority should provide these two meals in addition to dinner—which will mean an increase in staff at the central kitchen and at the dining centres. It is also being asked to provide supervision of the schoolchildren between breakfast and school and after school until the mother returns home, for somebody should look after them under black-out conditions. It is hardly possible that teachers, however willing, will be able to undertake this work since, in addition to many extra duties in school, they are doing Civil Defence, Home Guard, and fire watching duty. Other staff will, therefore, have to be found.

This analysis shows that if the old adage that "woman's work is never done" is true, it is also the most economical form of labour in existence. Because it is unpaid this fact has never been recognised. A whole family of five or eight people is looked after entirely by one woman, and if she is sent into full time work, her jobs have to be taken on by no fewer than six different groups of workers, i.e., for day nursery, shopping, washing, meals for school children, evening meal for husband, care of children after school. And still the home will not be so well cared for and the mother, if she has any standard at all, will strain herself to do extra work when she gets back at night or at the week-end.

If she has to work on night shift, there will have to be residential nurseries for the small children at a greater cost of woman-power than even day nurseries, and unless the husband is at home and not also on night work, someone must look after the schoolchildren when the parents are out. Public opinion would not tolerate their being left alone with the possibility of air raids.

Is it really an economic use of woman-power to urge mothers to go into full time work? The amount of organisation necessary to get all their jobs done—apart from the difficulty of finding suitable premises for nurseries and meal centres, and getting them properly altered and equipped, all of which takes valuable building labour—would surely be better spent in arranging schemes by which mothers can do part time work outside the home and still manage their home duties. A scheme of this sort would mean that women who live near one another should co-operate to do one job in a factory and two jobs in their homes. In some cases morning and afternoon shifts are practicable, but where the work is far from the home, the time and money spent on travelling is too great. Also, workman's fares are not available in the middle of the day. The alternative arrangement would be one of alternate days in the factory and in the home. When one woman is at work the other will look after her children, and cook an evening meal, and vice versa. Each woman would do her own shopping, cleaning, washing, etc. Part-time day nurseries for the two to fives need much less staff than whole-time nurseries for the under fives, and would relieve each mother in turn. So would school dinners, but it would not be necessary for the public authority to provide breakfasts, teas and evening meals, or to find staff to supervise schoolchildren.

Is it not time that the Government appealed to the women to help by planning this work amongst themselves? Day nurseries, even if they could be supplied in sufficient numbers—which is quite impossible owing to shortage of premises and trained staff—will only take over one of the six jobs which the mother has to do, and it is not fair either to the public, or to the women, to speak as if their complex problem can be solved by this means alone.

The Ministry of Labour should settle what jobs can be done on a part-time basis and send the free, full-time woman where she is needed. It would help if Government departments generally set an example of part-time work, as some are already doing. Employers should then be told that only part-time labour will be supplied for the specified jobs and the Ministry of Labour, which has all the particulars would only send for this work women with domestic responsibilities. When it is made known in any locality that part-time work is available, women should be asked to make mutual arrangements, and the Employment Exchange would help, as some are now doing, to find "pairs" to work one machine.

The Government should take the women into their confidence, show that it understands their domestic problems and say that although it will do what it can to help by the provision of day nurseries and school meals it realises that many other parts of a mother's work cannot be done for her by the public authorities. If it then appealed to the women to solve the problem by arrangements amongst themselves, mobilisation of the woman-power of the country might be achieved. At least I see no other way by which this can be done. SHENA D. SIMON

A LONDON DIARY

IT is heartening to see everywhere the signs of a real understanding of the Russian achievement. One of the great results of Hitler's aggression there has been to make it certain that popular feeling will compel the present half-alliance to assume a more permanent form. Certainly, the working-class realises that our debt to Russia is immense; and nothing that its enemies can do (they still exist) will persuade the workers to have confidence in any government which does not give all its energies to Anglo-Russian friendship. These six months have wiped out all possibility of a return to the epoch where the Jixes and the John Simons could apply one diplomatic code to Russia and a different code to other States. I only wish that Mr. Churchill would realise how much of Russia's strength is the outcome of the career open to the talents. Certainly there are very few realms of the national effort in which we have made any serious and searching effort to discover the ability that is at our disposal.

* * *

I hope that Mr. Bellenger will feel able to give the War Office the details of the case in which he alleges that an applicant for a commission was asked by the presiding officer of the Board about his father's bank account. I should feel more impressed by Mr. Sandys's indignant repudiation of the charge if it were not that it is accepted as true for many such boards by officers in whose judgment I have great confidence. Not only is this so; I know men in the ranks who have deliberately refrained from applying for commissions because they did not want to suffer the humiliation of rejection on class-grounds. It may well be that the War Office has issued instructions that tests of this character are no longer applicable. But it is one thing to issue such instructions and quite another thing to see that they are observed.

* * *

Some of the Treasury's methods pass the civilians' understanding. X. is a leading aircraftman who is doing forecasting work in the R.A.F.V.R. Meteorological Branch, which is normally staffed by civilians. He was selected for promotion to commissioned rank, but this was refused by the Treasury on the ground that the officer complement was full. He has, however, been permitted to resign from the Air Force and become a temporary Civil Servant. As a leading aircraftman he received 5s. per day, and was, of course, liable on an operational station for "abnormal" duty without extra pay; as a civilian assistant (Grade T.A. III) he will receive a salary of £150–£315 per annum for a 44-hour week, with abnormal duty and overtime pay in addition. He has been doing this work for two years; and he has been working side by side with Grade II forecasters who are civilians on a fixed salary of £300 per annum, plus war bonus and payment for "abnormal" duty. Logic and economy combined do not seem to suggest that this is the wisest approach to the problems of organisation involved. He himself bitterly resents his reversion to civilian status; and he is convinced that he gets better liaison with the aircrews when he is in uniform. Nor does he see why civilian officers who attended the same forecasting course as himself should have seniority in appointment when the delay is due to the date of the Treasury's decision about his proposed commission.

* * *

There seems no limit to the degradation which Vichy France imposes on itself. Two International brigadiers, Franz Dahlem (who was formerly a Reichstag Deputy) and Luigi Longo, both interned in the infamous Camp Vernet, were recently granted visas for Mexico with their passages paid. The authorities at Vichy have refused them Exit Permits and they have both been sentenced to imprisonment. This, legally, makes them criminals and liable to deportation. It is believed, in fact, that Vichy proposes to hand them over to the Gestapo. I suppose it is impossible now for our Foreign Office to exert any influence in these matters, but I hope that a careful record of such infamies is being kept that there may one day be a full accounting with those responsible. If anyone still remains unaware of the character of Camp Vernet I recommend him to read Arthur Koestler's *Scum of the Earth*, where he will find a characteristically dispassionate account of its conditions.

* * *

Professor Sabine, of Cornell University, has just published a noble edition of the works of Gerard Winstanley, the leader of the Digger Movement of Cromwell's time. Much of it makes astonishing reading to-day. "Particular propriety," he wrote, "is the cause of all wars, bloodshed, theft and enslaving laws that hold the people under miserie." His view of the function of the Churches is a remarkable anticipation of Marx. "If any poor enslaved man that dares not steal," he wrote, "begins to mourn under that bondage, and saith: We that work most have least comfort in the earth, and they that work not at all enjoy all contrary to the Scripture which saith, the poor and the meek shall inherit the earth. Presently, the tithing priest stops his mouth with a slam, and tells him that is meant of the inward satisfaction of mind, which the poor shall have, though they enjoy nothing at all." I have room only for one more quotation. Winstanley pleads for an equal interest in the State; that, he says, is true freedom. "This Commonwealth Freedom will unite the hearts of Englishmen together in love; so that if a foreign enemy endeavour to come in, we shall all, with joint consent, rise up together to defend our inheritance, and shall be true one to another." But he warns his generation against thinking that men without hope will fight with all their power.

* * *

Professor Sabine has done a superb editorial job. It is worth remembering that for some years past much the best work on the seventeenth century, an age in so many ways like our own, has been done by American scholars. Professor Haller's *Rise of Puritanism*, Professor Tindal's *John Bunyan, Mechanick Preacher*, Professor Hanford's *Handbook to Milton*, belong to that small class which only the work of Professor Tawney and Sir Herbert Grierson in this country can pretend to rival. Nor must I forget that Columbia University has, at long last, given us the definitive edition of Milton's works. We rarely give American academic scholarship its full due in British periodicals. While it is true that there, as here, the Ph.D. system gives birth to a lot of half-baked work, the level of its best scholarship is unsurpassed. Certainly it will be a great day when either Oxford or Cambridge is provided with a history as illuminating and as interesting as Professor S. E. Morrison's *History of Harvard University*. I add that I have mentioned some items in a single field, and that the same conclusion holds for other departments of scholarship.

* * *

I gave a talk in an Essex village last week to a "discussion circle" which was the joint effort of the local vicar and the officer in command of a detachment of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. About a third of the audience was composed of soldiers and they participated with full freedom in the discussion. A private gave a vivid, if dismal, account of his effort, before the war, to get serious training from a Government training centre. But the outstanding moment of the evening was when the officer in command paid a warm tribute to his men, and especially to the private whom I have mentioned. Here, at least, was an example of building contact between army and civil life to their mutual advantage. Admittedly, both the vicar and the officer were quite exceptional men, with obvious gifts of leadership. The fact remains that they have brought a new and stimulating interest into the life of this village, and that its atmosphere is more exhilarating and more democratic as a consequence.

* * *

What do university women do in wartime? I have just read a fascinating record which deals with nearly 1,100 old students of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. From this it appears that 219 were not professionally employed, though most were married and, in addition to running their homes, were doing voluntary war work of some kind; 192 were teaching in schools; 39 were in the different forms of adult education, including universities; 8 were in the Wrens, 7 in the A.T.S., and 10 were in the W.A.A.F.; 5 were in kindred services, mostly transport; 108 were in the Civil Service and 18 in the B.B.C.; 32 were in medicine or nursing; 9 were engaged in religious work; 49 were in such social services as house property management and hospital almoners; 64 were in secretarial or administrative work; 11 were training in research and diplomas; and 28 were in various other professions. It is, I think, a pretty impressive record. I note with interest that few university women seem drawn to business. HAROLD J. LASKI

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Windbag.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

As a result of these talks it will probably be decided that Russia will be given Command of the Eastern European theatre.—*Daily Express* Staff reporter in Washington.

Will Golfer advise visitor (public school) of good hotel, West End, on bus route to Roehampton?—Advertisement in the *Times*.

Three members of the Welsh Nationalist Party are in Swansea Prison, it was reported at a party

meeting at Caernarvon, for refusing to pay fines imposed upon them for "behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace" when they refused to stand when the English National Anthem was played on Aberystwyth Promenade on Whit-Sunday.

The meeting decided to write to the Home Secretary stating: "We hold that to imprison Welshmen for refusing to stand within Welsh territory to the English National Anthem is an example of oppression unparalleled in modern history. We call upon you to command the release of these three young Welshmen without a day's delay."—*Western Mail.*

Wanted, good Roasting Chickens, 1d. per pound above controlled price.—Advertisement in *Lincolnshire Standard.*

SITUATIONS

Retired barrister or K.C. Situation offered for "duration," charge of two petrol pumps and coupons. Whole time job. Average intelligence essential.—Advertisement in *The Garage and Motor Agent.*

TRADITIONAL

There must be far-flung outposts seized by treacherous attack
Though every preparation has been made,
There must be overwhelming odds with few to hold them back,
While strong relieving forces are delayed.
There must be tiny garrisons defying every threat,
Cut off from reinforcements and supplies—
Defending Britain's Empire where the sun has never set
From the empire where the sun's about to rise.

Our spearheads must be cornered and the corner must be tight,
Encircled enemies must spring the trap;
The hope must always be forlorn for which our pickets fight
In rearguard actions right around the map.
Behaviour in the field must be traditionally rash,
The High Command traditionally slow,
And generals must be models of insouciance and dash
Against the coldly calculating foe.

There must be decorations heaped on heroes of all ranks
For exploits of imperishable fame,
And full inferiority in planes, or guns, or tanks,
For which nobody at home can be to blame.

We must adhere precisely to the proper rules of war,
Though our enemies are *capable de tout,*
And knowing they will do again what they have done before
We must be quite astounded when they do.
We must make sure assistance is too little and too late
So the enemy, at first, may win the race,
For our circumambient strategy can well afford to wait
Till in 1943 we set the pace.

We must marvel at the enemy's fantastic will to win
As successfully we disengage our force,
And grit out teeth in readiness to take it on the chin
Until the war assumes its normal course.
And if we sometimes register an unforeseen reverse
Because the foe some reckless sally dared,
We have the consolation that things might have been far worse
If the Axis had surprised us, *unprepared.*

SAGITTARIUS

FOR THOSE IN PERIL ON THE SEA

[We print this article as a vigorous expression of the point of view of an ex-Merchant Seaman.—Ed. *N. S. & N.*]

How far a Royal Commission on conditions in general in the Merchant Service would go is at the moment difficult to foretell, but unquestionably it's boggy ground. The Merchant Service being bound up in traditions strictly its own would brook but little interference on its general activities as to uniform, most especially as to any form of discipline relating in any way to that of the Royal Navy.

I for one cannot see wardroom ethics being practised on the bridge of a heavily laden tramp in bad weather, probably many days overdue and in a state of cleanliness such as would make even a Naval tugmaster blush, cleanliness by no means due to the fault of the officers and men aboard. And as regards discipline, well, all I can foreshadow is something extremely funny, not to say damnably irksome for, say, the "Four to Eight" or the "Eight to Twelve" crowd going on watch in some sort of uniform that had to be more or less spotless, in particular among the Black Squad. Would they have to salute the quarter deck (should such be available on such ships) probably after having had to fight their way amidships over an open well deck awash and swinging sky high by heavy seas? Most of these forecastles being well up under the anchor winches, as dark as the pit in the alleyway, no lights being shown forrard at night whether in peace or war. The bridge will see to that matter!

Also, imagine a burly canny chief engineer of raw Scots origin being saluted at the head of a grimy stokehole fiddley on such a night. I simply would not like to frame up any sort of words to his reply. Then again, can anyone quite bring to their mind's eye and hearing what sort of comment would issue from the throats composed of honest Merseysiders or lads from Glasgow, their "Uniform" consisting of a pair of not too well repaired blue dungaree trousers, a battered singlet, plus the inevitable sweat rag slung round a corded neck held into position by the teeth.

Then take the deck hands, these men of the Merchant Service have no wish to be styled A.B. or P.O. or W.O., neither do the engine room crowd from the bunkers to the gleaming, plunging big ends wish to be addressed as Leading Stokers or Mechanicians. Just for one moment bring to the vision that lean swarthy sweating little fellow leaning over the guard rail of that gleaming crank shaft, oil can in hand, with a movement born of years of practice slipping a feeling hand on that plunging mass of metal, making sure that in no way was it becoming overheated. The steel floor beneath him is swaying and shuddering, yet with no effort whatsoever he keeps his balance. Now could one honestly, without a smile, listen to him being addressed as would his counterpart be addressed in the Navy! Also, would such foolishness work among the sweating men behind that closed steel door leading to the bunkers where, with little head or elbow room, barrow after barrow of coal had to be wheeled and dumped at the furnaces' feet?

No, and very definitely no, these men do not want any form whatsoever of Naval discipline. But what is required is for the Government to see that all these gallant fellows get the correct deserts that they so richly deserve. By all means supply them with working gear while at sea. *But a uniform*—No. And when ashore let the Government see to it that men while awaiting a ship or working by have accommodation where they can sleep and eat and rest in cleanliness and comfort at a nominal cost to themselves. Some companies already do this, in fact have done so for years, the Blue Funnel Line being one of the chief ship owners who give excellent comfort to their crews ashore, and at sea as well.

Do away with the long lines of shivering men at the docks, labour exchanges and shipping offices, where men line up for hours on end in peacetime awaiting forlornly the offchance of a berth. The present system of pool ships *could* be copied with improvements when the war is over. If the Merchant Seamen are worthy of their hire now, then for God's sake let them remain so when Hitlerism is laid in the dust.

The experiences that I have had myself around the docks, etc., of this country in times of peace for a maritime nation has been the disgrace of the whole world. Men have risked their lives gladly with not the price of a bug infested bed to lay their weary heads, not a penny even to buy a crust a bread, their clothes mere tatters, and good men and true are they indeed. To-day such are worth their weight in gold, and as such then let a generous Government put forth some energy and cash *which it can well afford,* at rigging up a Commission for the well-being of the men who are now facing every peril ever known to men who go down to the sea in ships. Let it be remembered, as yet, there is no system of pension for these men; neither, except for the war, has there ever been any scheme where men got any form of pay while waiting for a ship beyond the small amount available, after waiting eight hungry days, from the labour exchanges; and pray what might be the balance in hand of this section of Government insurance?

Then comes the question of food at sea. I agree for the most part ships are well found in this matter. Wherever glaring complaint is admissible then it may usually be traced to the ship's cook or a badly fitted galley. Whichever the cause, then rout it out! Accommodation also lays itself open to much ferreting; admitting there are not so many of these ships afloat in which the forecastle is simply a black stinking dungeon with ill-fitted lavatory along the same alleyway, and that needs no energy in the minds of oneself. Four rusty washbowls with taps that only trickle; an ordinary tub for the black squad. A galley in which not even the historical cat could be swung, and perhaps a crew, including all officers, to be cooked for in this unkempt hole.

Bedding again wants an overhaul, yet here again some companies do their crews well, but there are many vessels afloat where not even a blanket is supplied by the owners, the bunks often so badly knocked about and paintless, plus a good supply of blackbeetles or copra bugs is often all that greets a seaman where his tired and willing body may have to rest for several months, and very likely in the tropics at that. These and a host of other most imperative items really do need a Commission, and a good hefty one at that, as well to deal with such matters of high importance. But for the love of God who guards the men at sea, leave out any form of Naval tradition or discipline. Let it be remembered that in peacetime for the most part Naval vessels are comfortably at anchor and the crews, if not aboard, are comfortably ensconced in well found barracks.

I've no doubt some companies' directors who read this will cavil at losing a slop chest dividend if any clothing is supplied; well, then, the answer is to give the men a clothing allowance according to their respective jobs aboard. Give the men some form of chance at a pension, this could be arranged in some manner of superannuation or the like. At the moment these men, however many years at sea, have nothing left in their old age except ten bob a week, with the slender chance of a night watchman's job alongside their declining years. Make no fear, these men will repay; in the manner of Mr. Churchill; in sweat and toil.

C. W. BALCHIN

ONCE UPON A TIME

MOTES dancing in a long sunbeam entranced my eyes, while my mother sewed and read aloud. I waited for the rustle of the turning page, but the beautiful voice flowed on, clear as hill well water, and looking up from my footstool I saw the tattered copy of *The Water Babies* still open at the picture of Tom going over Harthover Fell. "Do you know it off by heart, too?" I asked. She blushed and laughed. "I ought to; you are the sixth to whom I've read it over and over again."

Years later, I realised that my mother's version, though word-perfect, was greatly abridged; she left out the moralising with which Charles Kingsley weighted his delightful fairy tale. Only, however, because it bored her, not because she thought it would weary the children. We were all used to moral tags and allegorical meanings, and possessed the faculty of disregarding them completely. We judged fairy stories by two qualities only, excitement and magic. Our mother added a third, good writing. No ill-written tale was read aloud in her house, a considerable restriction in a family deeply addicted to that pastime. For by the turn of the century, children's books had swollen from a trickle to a flood; and most of them were as worthless as their adult counterparts, the love novels. Yet with the chaff winnowed, a golden granary-full of classics remained. It was due to a nineteenth century phenomenon, the writing of books for children by serious authors. They were of various kinds; history books, of which Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* were an early example; adventure stories with *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* as their still unequalled prototypes. *Little Women* lives as a work of genius about family life; its imitations were pietistic and crawlingly sentimental. There were also, and still are, innumerable stories written to satisfy childhood's hunger for information; they used to detail the flora and fauna of coral islands, and now describe aeroplane parts. There was also the horrible genre of school stories, all cricket matches, hero-worship, and *esprit de corps*. But the best of all, to tell and to play in these endless sagas which we acted aloud when we were alone, and silently in the company of grown-ups, were fairy tales.

They draw from the sources of myth and folk-lore. They were first made not for children, but for the childhood of nations. Their magic quality lies less in spell and metamorphosis, in the flying carpet, the wishing ring, the prince smitten to stone, than in the belief conveyed by the teller that those things are true; that the castle is enchanted, and there is a witch in the wood. They are not namby-pamby nor pretty. Their atmosphere is that which lay all round the narrow clearings of primitive life; the dangers of the known, the choking terror of the unknown, only to be conquered by courage, wit, and luck. In any case the ear of children is acute; it distinguishes easily between true folk-lore and false. That is why, in the crucial controversy, "Are you a Grimm's or a Hans Andersen?" we were unhesitatingly Grimm's. *Rapunzel* and *Rumpelstiltzkin* were true magic. Some Hans Andersens were all right: *The Tinderbox*, *Elsa and the Eleven Swans*, *The Snow Queen*: old tales re-told, though we did not know it. But some we disliked. No fairy tale should make one sob, like *The Little Mermaid*. Instinct for the true tradition was strong in Scottish children, with legend and ballad for local inheritance. Our mer-wife, when she found the sealskin her prince had hidden, slipped it on and dived back into the Hebridean tide. Our *Young Tamlane* was won back from the Queen of Elfland at Carterheugh; you could see the very place. We fed gratefully upon the long string of Andrew Lang Fairy Books—the Crimson, the Violet, the Green—all the colours of the rainbow, stories from every land, plainly and clearly told, with satisfying pre-Raphaelite illustrations by Ford. I wish they would republish that series. It was from it, too, as well as from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Wonder Book* and *Tanglewood Tales*, that we learnt our classic mythology. We always thought the Greek Gods rather sneaking, and preferred Thor and Baldur of *Asgard and the Norse Heroes*. Christian legend was represented by the beautiful *Child's Book of Saints*, written, strangely, by a Presbyterian minister. There were some other good collections: *Granny's Wonderful Chair*, by the blind authoress, Frances Browne, and a little green book, *Nature Myths and Phantasies*, which smelt of the right magic; it was anonymous. Perrault of course was fundamental. We did not much like the *Arabian Nights*, save for *Aladdin* and *Ali Baba*; they were too complicated, and we had a bad translation.

But we liked the long books better than any. First of all, the *Alices*; in the proper old green edition. (How anyon imagines they can better it is one of the mysteries of modern publishing.) They have been promoted to grown-up philosophy and are quoted to learned societies by Sir Walter Layton and to the Court of Appeal by Lord Atkin, but they are lastingly enthralling to children. Not so much because of their wit, which children mostly miss, except for some of the simpler puns such as the school where they taught "reeling and writhing and fainting in coils," but because of the dream atmosphere, of the child who grows tall and short, of the mirror which melts to let her through, and the cat who fades to a grin. It is often said that Wonderland was a completely original conception, but this is only true in the sense that it founded a modern school. It derives from a very old story. Alice is own sister to Thomas the Rhymer, and Bonnie Kilmeny, to the children of Hamelin Town, and Odysseus, and hundreds of others who have crossed the mortal border. Near to the *Alices* in our esteem came a poetic tale on the same theme, Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy*. Thackeray's *Rose and the Ring* remains a masterpiece to-day: its satire is modern in spirit. It is also the sort which entertains children; we all laughed at fat Prince Bulbo and loved him; and we could all recite Countess Gruffanuff's diatribes. Mrs. Molesworth's *Cuckoo Clock* was pleasant, but not quite in the first flight. Later came George Macdonald, whose stories are uneven and puzzling, but amongst the most drenched in magical feeling ever written. *The Princess and the Goblin*, *At the Back of the North Wind*, and *The Golden Key* are all lovely; lovelier still the mysterious shimmer of *Phantastes*, with its forlorn hero Anodos, hunted by the Alder with the hole in her back, and haunted by his shadow. Better constructed and most rememberable were the Kipling tales. Mowgli and his friends the beasts of the jungle, were part of our imaginary comradeship, and little recked we of the lessons Kipling thought he was teaching us. I suspect he forgot them himself when he was writing *Rikki Tikki Tavi*. The later *Puck of Pook's Hill* has some excellent stories, especially the *Centurion* series, and *Dymchurch Flit*. For them Kipling used the simple device of people out of the past, who came and told Una and Dan their tales. E. Nesbit, more complex, let her children use charms to move to and fro in time. Many an Edwardian parent must have been bullied into subscribing for the *Strand Magazine* so that his offspring might devour monthly instalments of *The Enchanted Castle* and the superb trilogy ending in *The Amulet*. These tales have not dated; a niece of mine recently ordered for Christmas, "Anything by E. Nesbit."

The duties of an Aunt, and my private pleasure, have kept me a hopeful reader of fairy tales all my adult life. Odd swallows like *The Wind in the Willows* and James Stephens' *Charwoman's Daughter* do not make a summer. I must admit that only three authors of to-day are worthy to rank with the earlier enchanters. First there is Hugh Lofting, whose *Dolittle* Series delights the under-fives and whose *Twilight of Magic* is a beautiful book for older children. Secondly comes *The Hobbit* of Professor Tolkien: terrifying and thrilling with the dark cold magic of the North. And best of the contemporaries, John Masefield. I have given *The Midnight Folk* to several families: in all its covers come off with constant reading—the greatest tribute any fairy tale writer can receive.

These books are, or ought to be, part of the heritage of English-speaking children. Many of them still take pride of place in the children's shelves of the bookshops. Some can be found in the excellent child's section of the Everyman Library. Children, even endowed with modern scientific knowledge, do not change. They apprehend, because they themselves embody, the childhood of the race, whose fears and dreams are writ in fairy story. The mood of bewitchment is one into which imaginative children will always slip; some at their own will, some at the old opening:

> Once,—once upon a time;—
> Over and over again,
> Martha would tell us her stories
> In the hazel glen.

FREDA WHITE

QUEUE

I SOMETIMES feel sad when I enter a London railway station and see a long line of men and women slowly advancing in single file towards an open confectionery *kiosque* and another long line moving, half in hope and half in despair, towards the tobacco counter. They do not look happy, those queues. Most of those who stand in them look as if they had not tasted a chocolate or smoked a cigarette for years and as if, now in a state of desperation, they were engaged in a conspiracy to steal something to which they had no right. They know that they will be treated—and justly treated—with contempt by the girl who is dispensing those once innocent luxuries and that, in response to their pseudo-courageous request for some favourite make, she will say: "No, nothing but what's on the counter," and that they will buy what is on the counter, and in many cases regret having bought it. There is one brand of queue cigarettes which can be kept alight only by using a box of matches to every packet of ten; and there are no matches to be had at the end of a queue.

It is odd to reflect that the queue was originally introduced into these islands for the comfort and convenience of the public. It was, I gather from the New English Dictionary, an importation from France. At least, the first use of the word in its modern sense, "a number of persons ranged in a line awaiting their turn to proceed"—which the editors of the dictionary have been able to discover, is to be found in a sentence in Carlyle's *French Revolution*, dated 1837: "This talent . . . of spontaneously standing in queue, distinguishes . . . the French People." It may be that the French queue originated in the Latin love of order and in the politeness of a highly civilised people; but I wonder whether it suits the island races. Whether you stand in a queue or take part in a general scramble, the Devil always takes the hindmost, and the hindmost islander, before he became Frenchified, had at least had the excitement of taking part in a general scramble. Now he merely slinks away, gasmask over shoulder, with the aspect of a wet hen. The queue system may have many virtues, but it does not cheer people up.

I was fortunate enough to be born before queues had invaded my native city. If men wanted anything in those days, they had to fight to get it. When the Carl Rosa Opera Company came to town, all the most lawless Rugby players of the province seemed to have gathered round the gallery entrance and to go into action as the doors swung open. At the first creak of the withdrawing bolts, every man was on his toes,

mercilessly, joyously plunging his way past his weaker neighbours. It was a scrum without a ball, a mêlée of brute strength and cunning in which no quarter was given. Had it not been that I was very young and still had an insatiable craving for opera, I should never have ventured into such a rough-and-tumble. Daring all for an ideal, however, I would take my place near the front of the scrum, feeling sure that sooner or later I should be swept off my feet and precipitated through the door to the ticket office by an oncoming avalanche of men with nothing worse happening to me than bruised ribs and a cap awry. There is much to be said for going with the stream. It was the easiest way in those days to get into the opera.

And how happy we all were when, having raced up the infinitely long winding stone stairs that led to the gallery, we found ourselves in seats from which, perhaps, we could scarcely see the stage! There had been no malice in the fight. Everybody was happy, and everybody wanted to sing till the asbestos curtain went up. How often have I piped my share in a roof-lifting chorus of *The Boys of the Old Brigade* or *Cock Robin* as we waited for better music! I doubt whether such exhilaration would have been possible if we had been standing for an hour in an orderly and spiritless queue.

In those days, we had to fight our way into the Ulster Hall even for the watchnight service on New Year's Eve. I have seen the glass in the doors of the hall broken as we surged our way through to hear a red-haired Congregational minister announcing, in the broadest Ballymoney accent: "We will now sing *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*. We will sing this hymn sittin'." After the fight to get in, that seemed to us an excellent stroke of humour. If it had not been for the certainty of the struggle at the doors, many of us would probably not have been there at all; but, having struggled, we were prepared to enjoy anything.

It is, perhaps, not without significance that it was an islander who invented the phrases "the struggle for existence" and "the survival of the fittest." There is no doubt that in early life the struggle raises the spirits, and it has been said that islanders remain eternal adolescents. I have myself lost whatever I once had of this island characteristic, but I have often noticed how naturally people of the island races take to struggling, when struggling becomes the rule. I have read of women engaging in battle with each other during bargain sales at the great stores. During the last war, too, when it was difficult to get a seat on a bus, they showed that they were the equals, if not the superiors of men, by the heroism with which they stormed the buses at stopping places. A contemporary reporter thus described the common scene in 1917:

> The rush for the omnibus has been a habit with women since the services have been so severely curtailed. Even the mildest-looking woman will charge the railing with the cold fury of a footballer trying to stop an ugly rush. Many of them regard it as an achievement of which to be proud.
>
> "I've no manners left, my dear," wrote a young woman worker to a friend the other day, "and sometimes there are quite big bruises on my arms at night."

If there had been queues in those days, tired women would have arrived home with nothing better than a dismal story of a long stand in a queue as they waited for a bus. As it was, they returned to their families with a "Sound the loud timbrel" chant of struggle and triumph.

Humanity forbids us, however, to allow the struggle for survival to become utterly remorseless. Even in my native city, we had a notice on every tram-car: "The lifeboat rule is, women and children first." And the same anti-Darwinian spirit is shown to-day in the regulations which give children and invalids priority rights to milk and, as regards children, to oranges. To such concessions to modernity few reasonable men will object. There is, thank Heaven, an exception to every rule. If it were not so, we should all be Robots.

It is questionable, however, whether the queue system gives any advantage to women, children and invalids or anybody else to whom advantage ought to be given in the name of humanity. It is merely a putting into practice of the old cynical principle: "First come, first served." I have not yet seen a man, however muscular, giving way to a woman or a child in a queue approaching a cigarette stall. I myself lose all my faint relics of chivalry in a queue. In a struggle I may—I do not say I do—stand aside to let a woman pass; but in a queue I advance ruthlessly towards my goal.

I sometimes suspect—maliciously, no doubt—that the queue was introduced into England, not for the sake of women and children, but as an advertisement for theatres. How often we used to see reports in the newspapers under some such heading as "38 Hours Queue Waits for New Play." Such is human nature that three out of four people, reading this, are immediately filled with a desire to see a play for which other people have waited in a queue thirty-eight hours.

Certainly, the managements of a good many theatres were the strongest objectors to the demand that queues should be abolished and that all seats should be bookable in advance. They even put forward the argument that the public likes standing in queues, giving pennies to contortionists, escapers from handcuffs, imitators of Henry Irving, and spoon rappers as it waits. The hollowness of this argument was proved when theatre-goers began to hire stools and pay messenger boys to place them in the queue and sit on them till it was time for the doors to open.

Then there was the argument that the queue system is fair to everybody. This is obvious nonsense, for how is it fair that people who have to work till six in the evening should be unable to get into the theatre because people who have nothing to do are able to line up in a queue in the early afternoon?

It is hard, I admit, to devise an entirely fair system. One man's need is so much greater than another's. This is so even in such small matters as chocolates and cigarettes. The man in front of me in the queue may smoke cigarettes merely as a hobby: I smoke from necessity in order to be able to work. It is the same with confectionery. I can live comfortably without it; but my neighbour looks to it as one of the chief sources of his energy. The best system, it seems to me, would be one by which priority would be given to those who needed a commodity most. In such a system, the man with priority right would be given a badge entitling him to be served before those to whom it does not matter whether they get the commodity or not. Thus, we should have two queues at every tobacco stall—a priority queue and an ordinary queue—exemplifying the old Communist motto, "To each according to his needs." The priority badges could be allocated on production either of a doctor's certificate or of a sum of money in taxation. I would gladly pay a pound a year to have priority rights at the tobacco stalls at Victoria Station. That, it seems to me, would be fairly fair, and the Government would be a pound the richer in consequence.

Y. Y.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Judas Was a Woman," at the London Pavilion.
"A Yank in the R.A.F.," at the Gaumont
"Here Comes Mr. Jordan," at the Regal.

Judas Was a Woman. Revival, with a gangsterish title, of Pierre Renoir's *La Bête Humaine*. Admirable French realism that does justice to Zola's novel, especially in the acting of Jean Gabin and Simone Simon and in the setting of the Paris-Havre railway. More thrilling than Hitchcock's *Suspicion*, and also more brutal.

A Yank in the R.A.F. The war, London raids, bomber station, invasion of Netherlands, Dunkirk, as background for romance of American pilot (Tyrone Power), a charmer and a bit of a heel, and blonde cabaret girl (Betty Grable). Unrealistic and successfully sensational.

Here Comes Mr. Jordan has an idea, and ideas are so rare in the film world that we are asked to keep this one under our hats. "Under no circumstances," insists the programme note, "should the story of *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* be revealed to future audiences, in the interests of their own enjoyment and surprise." In the interests of future pockets, however, it may be hinted that *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* is nothing to make a song about. There are some genuine flashes of eerie comedy; but the authors seem to have taken *Outward Bound* and the Topper series, and to have tried hard to roll them into one. There's a bit about passing over, and being standard-bread, and arriving you know where; but then it appears there's been a mistake. Very awkward, so we have to pass back again, with another 50 years' lease and nowhere to go. We have been cremated while we were away, and now we have to look round for another corpse—sorry, fleshly overcoat—to step into. Somewhere in this fantasy, which gets up steam like a Heath Robinson invention, there is a murder, Robert Montgomery, dapper other-world men, love looking into the eyes and beyond, a boxer with a lucky saxophone, transubstantiation, an aeroplane crash, the fun of talking to people who aren't there and not seeing those who are, and a moral that perhaps I shouldn't divulge. "Everything will come right in the end." And so it does, for those who are in at the end.

No. 9. Northumberland Avenue.

Langford Grove has a reputation—a reputation not only as a Girls' School but as a school of adolescent art. As such it is generally reckoned the centre of the movement in England. "Adolescent," we say, not "childish," because, so far as children's painting goes, the audacity and sureness of the babies in the Council Schools are unmatched. The girls of Langford Grove are older and more sophisticated, and their work has earned for the school a reputation as a centre of culture. This exhibition is disappointing: partly this may be because the meagre collection of some five-and-twenty works is ill-displayed in an unsuitable room. The most accomplished of the exhibitors is Elizabeth Carr, whose works would not look out of place in the London Group. *The Three Ships*, by Shirley Powys-Maurice, is perhaps the most taking thing in the show. The anonymous author of No. 13 already knows as much about painting as some of her teachers, we surmise. Mary Leacock's picture is very nice; and Janya Vinogradoff has a charming fancy which may be childish or may be Russian. All those who take an interest in children's painting should visit the exhibition. The pictures are for sale; and half the proceeds will go to Mrs. Churchill's Russian fund.

The Leicester Galleries.

Here are works by four: Mervyn Peake, Alison Debenham, Leila Faithfull, Kanelba. It must be admitted the ladies have the best of it. Mervyn Peake, obviously a man of intelligence and as obviously not a plastic artist, experiments in various styles from that of Dicky Doyle to that of Dali—neither Picasso nor Chirico having been overlooked. We prefer him in the Victorian mode, for here his literary imagination can be brought into effective play. It is creditable to the ladies, whose works share the second gallery, that though both are admirably modest, neither making the smallest attempt to assert her personality, the work of each is unmistakable. Both are artists: each has something of her own to express. Alison Debenham is the more accomplished—at any rate the more Parisien. Her restaurant scenes are justly popular; the inside of a restaurant being a theme which seems to provoke all her natural gaiety and good spirits: in some of the later pictures (e.g. Nos. 101, 102) there is a tendency to muddiness which might surely be corrected. At times Leila Faithfull is amateurish almost; but hers, one suspects, is the finer artistic temperament. Her observation is often deliciously acute, and feminine; but with observation she is never content. Always it is at expression she is aiming; often it is what she fails to achieve. Nevertheless, No. 77—a minute picture—is probably the best thing in the gallery. The works of these two unpretentious artists are seen to advantage by comparison with the pictures in the Hogarth Room which are by a gentleman who prefers to be known as "Kanelba" *tout court*.

"Old Acquaintance," at the Apollo.

Good play, very good acting. To put one writer on the stage and make him or her convincing is difficult enough, but Mr. Van Druten without turning a hair gives us two. Both are women novelists entering on middle age, old friends but as different as the labels "highbrow" and "lowbrow" can make them. At first one sees only the differences. Katherine Markham (Edith Evans) has all the intelligence, the disparaging affection, the tact, the fascination for others, the interesting love affairs, the energetic living and shy productivity of the "good" writer getting somewhere. The other (Marion Spencer) fading and frilly, married (unsuccessfully), selling (miraculously), has her flair for tosh that eddies out in print and that carries her on breezes through situations appallingly sticky. The comedy of this friendship, involving several love entanglements and a usurping younger generation, is deliciously worked up. Worked up rather than worked out, for the whole play is really an excuse for bringing these two characters to a clash and to final reconciliation. The tempestuous scenes of Act II, set among the satins and rococo furnishing of best selling, lead up to a wonderful climax when Katherine Markham for the first and last time gives her silly friend a vigorous shaking—"How I have longed for this moment!" cries Miss Evans triumphantly. It is the funniest and most thrilling moment of her brilliant performance; yet even here we feel an undertone of the affections linking this most oddly assorted and desperately warring pair of friends. With great skill Mr. Van Druten works his plot so that they are left alone at the end, admitting they can't get on without one another. Needless to say, Miss Evans plays her part, love scenes and skirmishing scenes, with incomparable subtlety and verve. Miss Marion Spencer must have been tempted to caricature her's; but her performance, too, is sympathetic and she keeps the wildly appealing tone so necessary to this comedy of exasperations and regrets. The others of a small cast also acted well, and only once or twice, to help the plot, did rivulets of sentiment lead too far away from the main stream of our enjoyment.

Correspondence

SCIENCE AND POLITICS

SIR,—On November 30th the President of the Royal Society, Sir Henry Dale, asserted the desirability of keeping science free from connection with "controversial politics," whether revolutionary or reactionary, or even, he said, from "any kind of extraneous influence." It is doubtful whether any precise meaning can be attached to these words, and they might not be worth discussing if the *Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* had not, with happy unanimity, shown that they attach a very definite and satisfactory meaning to them.

If I discover the food requirements of an average child or the fertiliser requirements of an average acre, no one objects to my stating my results as a scientific observation. If I communicate these results to the appropriate government official and he places them in the correct pigeon-hole and nothing further is done about it, what action am I to take? On Dale's theorem it seems that there is nothing further for me to do but to return to my bench and proceed to make another set of observations, with proper humility and love of truth. This is a mighty encouraging prospect.

Now what is the reason for undertaking scientific research? It may be said that if I were obeying the second part of Dale's theorem, and keeping myself free from such extraneous influences as the need for food, I should never undertake such futile work at all. I should confine myself to my proper field of pure research, whatever that may be. I should even forget about the war. This also is a mighty encouraging prospect.

But take yet a third possibility. Suppose that by a lucky stroke I have made a scientific discovery which is neither revolutionary nor reactionary, but which confirms me in the belief which every honest Fellow should hold, that things are just right as they are, that the present distribution of food and fertilisers is most correctly adjusted, that the apportionment of brains in high places is exactly what one would desire, what do I do then? Surely on Dale's theorem I have a doctrine which I can safely cry from the housetops, a doctrine that will do harm to nobody, or at least to nobody of importance.

That is what the *Manchester Guardian* describes as "The Place of Science." The place of science in what, pray? In a democracy? I think not. It is the place of science in a world in which men of science will be treated with the contempt they deserve.

C. D. DARLINGTON

John Innes Horticultural Institution,
Merton Park.

BRITISH NAZISM

SIR,—There appears to be some misapprehension regarding the nature and the scope of the Southern Rhodesia Land Apportionment Act of 1941. The article published in your issue of November 22nd under the heading "British Nazism" seems to have given the impression in some quarters that the Act represents a new departure in native policy. This is not the case. The Act is merely an amending measure arising from the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. It makes certain necessary adjustments in favour of the native inhabitants which experience has shown to be necessary and desirable. The 1930 Act was passed when the last Labour Government was in power, when Lord Passfield was Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and Mr. Lunn the Under Secretary. It was based on the recommendations of the Morris-Carter Commission of 1925 and had the overwhelming support of both the native and European population, as the report itself makes clear in paragraph 76 in the following words: "The desire of the whole population, black and white, who are interested in and understand the question is, generally speaking, in favour of separate areas . . ."

It is clear that the constitutional position of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs is not fully understood. The only power which he possesses in respect of native legislation in Southern Rhodesia is the power of veto. If the Secretary of State had vetoed the 1941 Act, the 1930 Act would have remained in operation unamended. The Act of 1930 put into operation the policy which after careful consideration it had been decided to follow and with which the Labour Government of the time agreed. That policy can only be reversed and the 1930 Act repealed by the Southern Rhodesia Parliament itself. To make attacks upon the present Secretary of State for a policy already adopted with the approval of His Majesty's Government shows a complete misapprehension of the position.

It is also greatly to be regretted that the native policy of a self-governing colony should be described as "British Nazism." The comparison between Southern Rhodesia and National-Socialist Germany, with all its abominations, is in any case a false one, and unworthy of the NEW STATESMAN. Nor is it helpful merely to look back to the past and say that if those who went before us had been wiser much would have been different. The impact of a European civilisation upon the primitive races of Africa clearly creates immense problems of the greatest complexity—as it has done in every country where the white man can settle side by side with the black man. But we must face the fact that the two races are now established side by side in parts of Africa and we are called upon to deal with the difficulties as they present themselves now. For better or for worse the native has come into contact with European civilisation. No doubt he cannot and should not be denied its benefits. But it would equally be absurd to pretend that his life can remain undisturbed. What is important is that there should be as little disturbance as possible. That is the whole purpose of legislation such as this, which aims at preserving to the natives certain areas, where they will be safeguarded from the encroachment of the white man.

It is unfortunate that the impression should be given that the natives have been deprived of the best land in the country and relegated to poor areas. Careful investigation has shown that this is not the case. The policy embodied in the Bill means that while the native cannot purchase land in the European areas, the European cannnot buy in the native areas. It provides moreover that the natives who are no longer content with tribal conditions and who wish to live outside any native reserve are able to purchase individual rights. It is doubtful if the natives would have been able to buy land and settle outside their own tribal reserves unless certain areas had been left to them.

The Act of 1930 therefore improved the conditions of native land tenure, and opened up prospects for the native population which would have been denied them if the policy which it embodied had not been adopted. That is no doubt why it received the approval of the Labour Government here in 1930. In view of Dr. Moody's most misleading letter, it is only fair that these things should be stated.

P. V. EMRYS-EVANS

House of Commons.

[Our article did in fact say that the 1941 Act was a "continuation of an Act of 1930," and as for Mr. Emrys-Evans's suggestion that the natives prefer the principle of segregation, we know of no evidence that the natives prefer that they should be confined to 30 per cent. of the land, while nearly all the rest, including much of the most fertile areas, is reserved for the European 5 per cent.—ED., *N.S.&N.*]

CONSCRIPTION OF YOUTH

SIR,—Recent discussion in the press, particularly in the *Times* and in Mr. Stone's letter in your columns on the subject of "Child Conscription," has been playing round a vital topic without probing it. I refer to the "Youth" problem and more especially to the three aspects of it as expressed in juvenile delinquency, unnaturally high wages in "blind alley" occupations and in our own inadequate treatment of both these phenomena. The reason for this reluctance of contemporary writers and speakers to grasp a prickly thistle lies in an unresolved contradiction.

On the one hand, the war has made us conscious of the tragic plight, spiritual and material, of our youth; on the other hand, the cure which it has brought with it and at which the Government and local education authorities have so eagerly and blindly grasped may well be worse than the disease. For with the registration of boys and girls between the ages of 16 and 18, the constant jet of propaganda directed at them by cinema, radio and press, and the consequent befuddling of their hearts and minds, already made sluggish and unresponsive by the perversions of industrialism, we seem to be setting about educating a generation of men and women who will continue to embrace war because they have not been taught to contemplate the existence, let alone the superiority, of any alternative state of affairs.

The issue is perhaps most arrestingly exemplified in the present activities of an O.T.C. officer and a teacher who regards war or the preparation for it as an immoral instrument of education. The former is providing his "Youth" with a discipline and a pattern, and quenching its thirst for a purpose and thrill in life, but his method has to rely on training for wholesale murder. The latter knows a method based on timely growth and the way of acceptance, but can only acquaint his "Youth" with it at the risk of being deemed a traitor to his country and of placing quite unfairly the onus of sharing a minority opinion on those of his pupils who respond to his message.

Yet both men, generally speaking, are sincere leaders of "Youth," with a genuine sense of vocation. Is there room for both of them? That is the question to which teachers secretly and openly are seeking an answer. A true answer can only be found in the realm of supranational honesty and individual repentance for world disaster—a realm which we all seem to have quitted "for the duration."

YOUTH CLUB LEADER

ANTI-NAZI

SIR,—The addition of thousands of probably innocent people to the long list of enemy aliens is a timely reminder of a question of major policy, which, having been shelved, must now be solved, and solved wisely and permanently.

As a Federalist and a refugee, I claim space in your very excellent paper for a few observations which I trust will be helpful to those who are struggling with this problem. I know quite well that many well-meaning attempts and suggestions have been made to convince the public and the Government that the vast majority of the refugees in this country are pro-allied, but I fear that so far no major step has been taken in the right direction.

I am convinced that the term "pro-allied" is much too limited, as the only thing that counts in this gigantic struggle is whether a man is willing to go to any length to see Nazism beaten. We refugees know better than anyone else that there can be no compromise with the Nazis, and we know too that they never forget their one-time opponents, be they active or passive. It is significant that they demanded the surrender of all refugees when France fell, and their fate is fairly obvious.

I can assure you that people who came to England because they knew England was the last surviving great democracy this side of the ocean, are willing to bring any sacrifice if it will only help to seal the

fate of Nazism. But now it is up to the Government of this country to take a lead in recognising refugees as allies on equal terms with all other active anti-Nazi peoples. There is no need for such a Gilbertian institution as a Free German or Austrian Government, but we wish and deserve to be admitted on equal terms with any other volunteer to the fighting forces of the Crown. I would gladly swear allegiance to the King, and so would many others who cannot at present be admitted to the fighting forces.

The refugees have a much older and bigger score to settle with Nazi Germany, and we shall welcome every opportunity of settling it. Give us the tools, and we will do our part in the common job.

Let those in power, who must see eye to eye with me, come out openly with a statement recognising the refugees from Europe as active allies, and stop classifying them with a system they hate beyond all description.

Junior Common Room, Birkbeck College, E.C.4. HANS U. ROM

GIFTS FOR TROOPS

SIR,—I am the vicar of a country parish in the Midlands, the population of which (1,200 in all) is well-disposed to the personnel of a V.P. here in our midst. In 1939 comes along the officer in charge. Will we do something for the men? They want games, gramophones, wireless set, etc. Certainly: and I appeal for these things, which are sent to the dump. Many thanks from the officer. After an appalling winter, when the men nearly froze to death sleeping in tents, with two feet of snow on the ground, this batch of men departs. I contact the new officer. Padre, will you do something for the men? They want games, etc., etc. But, say I, this has already been done. Oh, yes; but the last company has taken them away. My enthusiasm now slightly modified, I appeal again, and once more games, etc., are sent. A new batch with officer again arrive, and I am asked to go through the same procedure again. The people of the village begin to ask questions, but the fact remains that for the last two years, as each new batch of men arrive, I am asked to do the same thing. But I have cried a halt. We cannot supply the whole Army! After months of questioning, correspondence and visits from Army Welfare officers, the truth appears that there is no one "high up" who is either competent or willing to issue an order that gifts shall not be removed by each departing company. I ask—is this a common experience throughout the country? And what is the remedy? On another point, I should like to ask my clerical confrères whether or no the provision of Bibles and Prayer Books ought to be the job of the Chaplain's Department at the War Office. In my simplicity it seems to me that if, as we are so often told, the possession of such articles assists the morale of the troops, why are they not indented for together with bully and biscuits, and paid for with national funds? If they are not essential, it would seem that the printing and scattering broadcast of them comes perilously near to deliberate disregard of the paper-saving campaign.

CLERICUS IGNOTUS

BLOCKADE

SIR,—May I take point by point Mr. Balogh's reply of Dec. 13th, to the implied request in my letter for informed criticism on this subject.

He says that the Ministry of Economic Warfare's contention that the cut in German civilian clothing ration will be detrimental to morale has not been proved. It is not a thing that can be easily "proved" but our contention is based on analysis of information received (about which Mr. Balogh is not, of course, in a position to be informed).

He says that M. E. W. attributes Germany's shortage of textile raw materials wholly to blockade; in fact I did not say this. He goes on to say that it is absurd to attribute the clothing cut to *absolute* shortage of textile raw materials. That is why I wrote that it is due "in great part" to shortage. It is true that in the long run and after a complete readjustment of the European economy the effect of the blockade could be described as simply reducing the productivity of labour; since this low productivity will itself originally have been caused by the lack of raw materials, it is really only a verbal point whether one describes a further cut in rations as due to raw material shortage or not. But the readjustment of the European economy needs time and peace. The Germans have had neither. Their economy to-day certainly suffers from specific raw material shortages and not only from a generally low productivity.

He says that M. E. W. is guilty of "deprecation" of German methods of economic mobilisation, with deterrent effect on our own war production. Here your correspondent is leaving the original point. It is the business of M. E. W. to report on German methods and their success in Germany, but it is for the Government to decide whether German methods should be adopted here.

He says that M. E. W. has missed the opportunity of instructing our own production departments in the more efficient techniques developed by the Germans. Here again your correspondent is not in a position to be informed of the facts, which are that the appropriate departments are given full details of Germany's techniques. For example, before the clothing ration in this country was worked out, M. E. W. was consulted about Germany's system. Mr. Balogh says that M. E. W. never in his recollection called attention to the formidable nature of the Nazi war regime. M. E. W. has, of course, done so in many ways, some of them outside the scope of Mr. Balogh's recollection.

Mr. Balogh's instances of disastrously rebutted criticisms are not all specific. Both the Ministry of Information's pamphlet *The Assurance of Victory* and Mr. Cross's speech of January, 1940, were describing a situation which was, of course, wholly changed by the German conquests of May and June. Mr. Balogh still does not specify the "predictions about oil" of which he complains. I will supply the omission. In a broadcast in December, 1940, Mr. Dalton said: "As regards oil, this is how things stand. So long as the British Navy continues to command the seas, including the Eastern Mediterranean, and so long as our Air Force continues to bomb the enemy's oil plants, oil stocks and oil refineries, and so long as the enemy continues to fight at all . . . then in a period to be measured in months not years, the enemy's oil position will be one of great and growing scarcity." The qualifications are usually forgotten. Nevertheless there is every indication of growing scarcity of oil in German Europe.

As to stories given out in the summer of 1940 that Europe was facing famine, they were not given out from M. E. W.: we have always said that there would be just enough food in Europe to go round if Germany did not take more than her share. And as to the statement that the Nazi war effort would *suffer* as a result of the occupation of Europe, M. E. W. has often said that in the long run Germany will not gain from the occupation of Europe. That prophecy has yet to be "disastrously rebutted."

The final criticism, that M. E. W. reports contributed mainly to giving the British public a distorted view of Russian policy. What reports? M. E. W. made no public reports (apart from the Minister's answers to Parliamentary questions, which are on record); but, in fact, the Ministry's estimates of supplies going from Russia to Germany before June tallied to within 5 per cent. with the figures since given us by the Russians; and the conclusions drawn from them as to Russia's economic policy in relation to Germany have been equally correct.

JOHN RAYNER,
Ministry of Economic Warfare. *Press Officer.*

THE CASE FOR ALBANIA

SIR,—Your paper has defended the rights of small nations with great fervour. In "Albania's Case," in particular, it has shown deep understanding and sympathy, for which we are all very grateful. The future of our downtrodden country continues to be as obscure as ever. Apart from the injustice that it involves, this state of affairs encourages all kinds of intrigues and mischievous speculations which may prove highly dangerous to a future Balkan settlement. Only recently someone writing in *Free Europe* suggested that after this war Albania should be partitioned between Greece and Yugoslavia, irrespective of the principles of the Atlantic Charter and other Allied declarations.

May we give a brief outline of Albania's present position? Albanian guerillas and deserters from the Italian army contributed towards the victories of Koritza and Gjinokastra. When these towns were occupied by Greek troops, nothing was done, alas, to show that Greece had Albanian independence at heart. In fact, a few ugly fingers were raised pointing to the desirability of annexing the "liberated" territory. Naturally, this came as a severe shock to Albanians, and especially to those who led the anti-Italian revolutionary movement in the country. The prospect of a mere change of masters after a bloody struggle cooled their enthusiasm for the Greek cause, which in the beginning they had readily identified with that of all freedom-loving nations.

Over six months have elapsed since those unhappy events. The Greeks and Jugoslavs have been trampled down by the Axis armoured divisions. The Allied battle-front has become a vast one, stretching from Murmansk to Tobruk. The political front has been infused with fresh vitality by the Atlantic Charter and the Allied conferences at St. James's. Throughout Europe the oppressed peoples are sabotaging the enemy's war production and hitting him hard in every way they can, knowing well that Allied victory will restore their lost freedom and human rights. Albanians, too, have continued the strife against Mussolini's blackshirts and soldiers, but they have done so in the loneliest and most forlorn conditions imaginable. Not a word of hope or encouragement has reached them from British Ministers or other Allied statesmen, who have been so generous towards other victims. Forsaken by all, Albanians fight on because throughout their history they have never hesitated to die fighting when the alternative has been to surrender their soul to slavery.

Albania's case is as clear as any such case can be. She was the first country in Europe to take up arms against Axis aggression. No one fired a shot to help her, and so she was overwhelmed. She has lost valuable territory and people during the last half century or so, therefore no nation which lines itself with those fighting for the vindication of international and human sanity in the world can covet with impunity the little she had in 1939. Why, then, all this mystery, this utter neglect?

The whole affair would be cleared up if the British Government made a declaration to the effect that Albanian independence will be restored when the Nazi and Fascist regimes have been destroyed. And we see no reason why this step should be delayed any longer. Albanians are participating in the great alliance of Europe's oppressed against the forces of perpetual tyranny. Why not recognise their contribution and promise them the future they deserve? Speaking on Albania a few months ago at the Royal Institution, Miss M. E. Durham, an eminent writer on Balkan affairs, said: "Do not let them (the Albanians) be offered up as a human sacrifice either to appease our foes or propitiate our Allies."

PERLAT BOGDO — ANTON LOGORECI
DERVISH DUMA — MILTO NOCKA
Q. E. KASTRATI — T. ZAVALANI

CONSCRIBING PROPERTY

SIR,—In your issue of December 6th, under the heading "One-sided Compulsion," you make a plea for public ownership of mines, factories, and public utilities, and I suppose that I may rightly describe THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION as an advocate of Nationalisation as a policy. I would like to suggest that many thinking people would support this policy were it not for the doubts raised in their minds by such articles as that published by you in the same issue and entitled "It's a way they have in the Army." Alas, is it not a way they have in most Government Departments dealing with civil affairs too?

JESSICA ALBERY

A SCOTSMAN

SIR,—Not a bagpipe but purrs through its drone since Y. Y. gave Scotland its due on December 6th. But has he noticed—he has, of course—has he sufficiently emphasised Scotland's leading export? I need hardly say I refer to grandmothers. Even in the show business they had a hand in the development of such celebrities as Ben Jonson, Ibsen, Shaw and Noel Coward; and in nobler fields how rich are their spoilings!

It is pleasant to think that Y. Y. himself owes his own character of Puritan-Voluptuary to a Mrs. Carmichael, with the Shorter Catechism in her mouth and a poke of sweeties in her hand.

Belfast. JAMES BRIDIE

Don't bury your dead
PAPER

BOOKS IN GENERAL

WE feel grateful to some explorers mainly because, by the anxious or romantic accounts they bring back, they dispense us from visiting those hideous, inhospitable and discouraging regions they have taken so much trouble to reach. But the Shackletons of literary and historical criticism rarely get their due, though they perform a like service. It would, of course, be impertinent to pretend that so important a region of French poetry as that examined by Professor H. J. Hunt* is not worth a visit; nevertheless, his heroism would be hard to overstate. If it requires a painful effort to-day to plough through *Les Martyrs*, how describe the endurance which has enabled him to read and digest the interminable minor epics of the century and to revive for us in précis that are always interesting and sometimes deliriously amusing the theosophic speculations of Fleischbein Duthoit Nembrini, the *Panhypocrisiade* of Népomucène Lemercier, the *Monde Antidiluvienne* of Ludovic le Cailleux, the *Divine Epopée* of Alexandre Soumet, the *Siècles Morts* of André de Guerne, and many kindred phantasmagorias more unimaginable still?

"Epic" is an elastic term, and it will be as well to give the definition which has guided Professor Hunt: "That type of poetic composition which relates the adventures of heroes who themselves, like the exploits they perform, are so magnified, so illuminated with a significant or even supernatural glamour, as to become in some way representative of a race, a people, an age of civilisation, a patriotic, religious or moral outlook"—a definition that has the double merit of width and exactitude. It brings to light, moreover, the characteristic dilemma in which the nineteenth-century epicists (whether in France or elsewhere) found themselves; for what hero, or what legend, could be representative of anything so heterogeneous as nineteenth-century civilisation, at any point of its development? By the time the Empire fell the state of religion and philosophy on the continent had become so chaotic that it seems to have been possible to believe literally anything. Reading through the fantastic *brouillamini* which intelligent and even eminent persons put forward in all seriousness, between 1800 and *circa* 1851, I had a sudden wild vision in which the ghost of Cagliostro, wand in hand and attired in a cabbalistic dressing-gown, was presiding over a vast company that consisted, among many others, of Alexander I and Mme. de Krudener, Chateaubriand and Mme. de Staël, Blake, Vigny, Benjamin Robert Haydon and "Mad" Martin, Ballanche, Mme. Sophie Gay and her daughter, and Edgar Quinet. These people were occupied in throwing into a steaming cauldron the figures of the Christian religion, of the Græco-Roman pantheon, and of the Arthurian legend, a handful of men and women culled from mediæval history, some assorted oriental deities with attendant dogmas, a newt's eye, a frog's toe, a serpent's egg, a toadstool, the blood of a newborn baby, a sphinx, a druid and a gnome, a hobby-horse, a locomotive, a steamship, and texts from Herder, the Bible, and the Rights of Man.

It was, of course, inevitable that such a climate of opinion should produce a series of syncretistic ideologies, but what is chiefly interesting is that the most important idea common to all of them was that of palingenesis—a doctrine of transmigration born of the need to reconcile belief in progress with the existence of evil and suffering. (It may be recollected in passing that palingenesis was an integral part of the druidic religion of pre-conquest Gaul.) The theory of history informed by this doctrine derives, in the last resort, from Vico, who reached French minds through the rather woolly medium of Ballanche and the much clearer one of Michelet; indeed, I think Professor Hunt does rather less than justice to the influence of Michelet on the *Weltanschauung* of French writers of the mid and later nineteenth century. In any case all this cross-grafting of religions and philosophies could hardly have resulted in a system clear enough in outline to provide the basis for a satisfactory epic, or indeed anything except "a sort of verbal delirium"—for that is the impression one derives from even so comparatively fine an example as Lamartine's *Chute d'un Ange*. Time refused to improve the situation, and the century's optimism describes an arc, of which 1848 forms the summit. Up to that year it was possible for poets to see the history of religions as the history of a progress; the Parnassians, with their return to Olympus and their frigidly "objective" oleographs, represent a backward trend consequent on the failure of hope embodied in the crass Philistinism of the Second Empire. After this only Hugo, renouncing any fresh attempt at syncretism, continued to build his faith on a more or less mediæval Christian basis, and the rest of the story peters out in an ever-dwindling list of Dierxes, Mendès, Coppées and Prudhommes. The insistence on dogma, which had been Rome's inevitable answer to the Reformation and to all subsequent secessionist enterprises, made in the interests of individual ethics, meant that in the long run she would have the writers against her, which is more than any religion can afford. Thus the most significant intellectual figure of the period is Renan, who in any other century would have been an archbishop, but who in the nineteenth was responsible for the etiolated Christ of the *fin-de-siècle* poets, who acquired an æsthetic at the expense of a moral and supernatural significance and became (in the words of Anatole France)

> Ce roi mystérieux qui console et qui pleure,
> Ce second Adonis et plus triste et plus pur.

A generation so indiscreet in its diet that it dies of surfeit is inevitably followed by one that is obliged to live on milk and rusks, and we of to-day are bound to feel that these valiant epicists of the early and mid-nineteenth century would have been better advised to narrow their focus and subscribe to the less German love of "All-ness." Our taste rejects them, so that we are unable, in spite of respect for so much cerebration and pleasure in incidental splendours, to regard these voluminous poems as other than on the whole a monstrous waste of energy—an attitude inconceivable towards Milton or Tasso or Spenser. Who does not regret that Blake should have spent so much time on *The Four Zoas*, and the rest, when he might have been writing lyrics and more prose criticism of morals in the style of the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*? What Professor Hunt calls, in criticism of Maurice de Guérin, "a certain stability in its underlying meaning" is essential to the effect of an epic, and it is the lack of this quality which spoils all these poems, together with what seems to me (though not to Professor Hunt) on the whole the best of the pre-Hugolian epics: Edgar Quinet's *Ahasvérus*. This extraordinary fantasia—a "library" drama over 400 pages long and written in a highly charged prose whose rhythm owes much to Aloysius Bertrand's small but very influential *Gaspard de la Nuit* (Professor Hunt has missed this point)—is well worth perusal to-day, for it displays the form at its best and worst. Concerned with the fortunes of that favourite of the romantic revival, *The Wandering Jew*, it ranges as freely as the second part of Goethe's *Faust* and contains scenes of arresting poetical power. But it attempts too much and always takes the easiest way out of a difficulty. An art-form that admits of conjuring up a Mysterious Old Man, or a Sphinx, to fill an awkward gap, and that takes no account of time, space or any kind of plausibility, is bound to defeat its own end, and Quinet's drama is chiefly important to-day as having evidently provided Flaubert with the model for the first version (1849) of his *Tentation de St. Antoine*.

The trouble with all these poets (Hugo included) is that, with a few notable exceptions, they insisted on casting into the rigid and cloying form of rhymed Alexandrines visions that cry out for music or film or radio—at the very least for the freedom of the prose-poem. This was, after all, the century which saw the greatest expansion of the opera and the novel that those forms have yet known, and a large majority of the poems discussed in this book are either librettos in which elaboration of characters and events is offered as a substitute for music, or else (as in the case of Lamartine's *Jocelyn*) novels which, by the monotony of the verse and the stilted effect produced by it on the story, abjure most of the advantages of that form. Again, the platitudinous and the bathetic are far more intolerable in a "tight" medium like the Alexandrine than they are in blank verse, and the incongruities of a Browning are less glaring than the distressing habit these French poets had of mixing up "eternal" and intrinsically poetic forms with pinchbeck of all kinds from the reign of Louis Philippe. Even Vigny's technical brilliance could not suffice to put across the locomotive in *La Maison du Berger*, and some of the wilder passages by later poets recall the satirical pictures of those early surrealists, Grandville and Doré. And surely this kind of thing:

> Dieu lisait dans son livre et tout était détruit.
> Dans le ciel par moments on entendait le bruit
> Que font en se tournant les pages d'un registre—

meant by Hugo to create a solemn effect, would in fact make a cat laugh.

There is something desperately pathetic in the efforts of these serious and often most talented writers to make their cumbrous machine achieve the spectacular fluidity, the endless and facile *enchaînements* of images which, in our day, the film has adopted as a technique all its own. Even discounting such advantages as these, it should be obvious that the development of romantic music made it peculiarly adaptable to the purposes of epic. The true epics of the nineteenth century are surely the mature operas of Wagner, and on a much lower level it is impossible to deny the title to the novels of Zola. There remains Hugo, whom most people, including Professor Hunt, regard as by far the most genuine epic poet of the century. In a sense of course this is true: Hugo outstripped his contemporaries in range and in imaginative and co-ordinative power; he had a more sensitive ear; he also had the wits to see that a poem like *La Légende des Siècles* could only be made digestible by splitting it up into series differing both in length and in metre. But even so, and with the best will in the world, I think it is difficult not to feel that his imagination, though powerful, was commonplace, that he had a Teutonic love of nimiety, and that his abuse of words like *horreur*, *horrible*, *abîme*, *profond*, etc.—an abuse as continual as that of obscene language in the army—renders some of his visions, such as *Dieu* and *La Fin de Satan*, as vague as they are tedious. Small wonder that men like Heredia and Banville, not to speak of Verlaine and Mallarmé, seeing how the wind was blowing, either trimmed their sails very considerably or put into port and handed over to the composers.

Professor Hunt is a most able apologist, especially where Hugo is concerned. Occasionally he astonishes by an omission, a high approval, or an absolute condemnation. What can have led him to pass over in silence Gobineau's *La Renaissance*, Villiers de l'Isle Adam's *Axel*, and above all Flaubert's *Tentation de St. Antoine*—all of them, on his own definition, "truer" epics than, for instance, *Jocelyn*? The last omission is all the odder in that he twice mentions *Hérodias*, which is not an epic at all, but merely a psychological *nouvelle* with a little local colour thrown in. I should myself be inclined to regard *Salammbô* as an epic, rather than as an historical novel, but I suppose Professor Hunt would in any case reject it, since he announces his intention—rather arbitrarily, it seems to me—of leaving novels outside the discussion. But then, what else is Quinet's *Merlin l'Enchanteur*, of which he gives a lengthy exposition?

Again, it simply will not do scornfully to pair Rimbaud with a poet of third-rate importance like René Ghil, if only because Hell—an essential part of nearly all the epics with which this book deals—was more powerfully and originally evoked by Rimbaud than by any other poet since Milton. In face of so flagrant an under-estimation one should not perhaps feel surprised by Professor Hunt's enthusiasm for poets like Laprade and Sully Prudhomme and that irredeemable old charlatan, Catulle Mendès—one of the cook-generals of literature who are prepared to have a shot at everything but do nothing really well.

Like all good critics, Professor Hunt arouses enthusiasm for his subject, and so acute and urbane is his writing that I think it well to suggest that his book will prove, for the majority of readers, better worth reading than a great many of the poems it discusses. It is in any case a very real contribution to critical literature.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

**The Epic in Nineteenth-Century France.* By Prof. H. J. Hunt. Blackwell. 25s.

THE DEMOCRAT REACTS

Men and Politics. By LOUIS FISCHER. *Cape.* 18s.

Louis Fischer is a democrat: he never forgets that the freedom and well-being of the small man comes first; he has never allowed himself to think that the acceptance of any particular doctrine or the size or success of any State or party is of any account except in so far as it means that more ordinary people will eat and drink better, have a better chance of understanding what the world is about, reading the books they want to read, fighting for their own rights, and generally telling the boss to go to hell. Fischer himself acquired this point of view early in life. He tells us that he was "born in the Philadelphia slums of poor parents . . . the family moved whenever it could not pay the rent—which was often. A long intimate acquaintance with poverty killed my dread of it."

As a young man of determination with an instinct for adventure, Fischer first saw Europe in the collapse after the last war. Soviet Russia offered hope and the promise of a new Socialist Order. Fischer built up a reputation as a journalist, gradually making himself Moscow correspondent of the New York *Nation* and writing regularly for several other papers, including this journal. In 1930 he published an able and well-informed study of Soviet foreign policy, under the title of *The Soviets in World Affairs*. While writing it, Fischer talked to a number of those who had had a share in making the history of the U.S.S.R. in its first years, and in particular obtained information, documents, and personal commentaries from Chicherin, that most eccentric and fascinating survival of Tsardom who became first Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. Fischer established an unusual position; he was accepted as a sincere but independent friend of the Soviet Union. He became devoted to the Russian people, travelled extensively throughout the U.S.S.R., making intimate friends, for instance, with the workers in the Putilov factory, and being able, by regular visits each year to compare conditions and estimate progress. He put the best interpretation on all he saw, knowing that the Soviet Union was the one State which had abolished economic exploitation, and believing that it was on the way to democracy and socialism. During the fourteen years in which Fischer was in Moscow he was commonly regarded as a Communist in Britain and the U.S.A.; on his yearly visits to the United States he consistently championed the Soviet cause in the press and on the platform. Those who knew him first became aware that he was seriously troubled about the trend of events in the U.S.S.R. during the controversy about abortion, which was prohibited in complete disregard of public opinion. It was a serious step in a country where reliable contraceptives were difficult to obtain, living conditions shockingly crowded, and women for the first time taking their place on an equal basis with men in public life. Early in 1937 the assassination of Stalin's best friend, Kirov, put an end to the liberalising tendency which had given Fischer and many others hope that Stalin no longer felt the need for drastic repression. The Constitution of 1936 was the high-water mark of this tide; it exists as a sign of what may some day be hoped for in the U.S.S.R. It has in practice been a dead letter. The purges were pushed to fantastic lengths during 1937 and 1938. In this book Fischer describes in some detail the effects of mass execution on Russian life. He himself changed from a vehement supporter of Stalin to a bitter opponent. He remained a lover of the U.S.S.R., but he could no longer live there. He threw himself heart and soul into the Civil War in Spain, saying, however, nothing in praise or criticism of the Soviet Union until the German-Soviet Pact in August, 1939.

After the collapse of the Spanish Republic, and the outbreak of war, Fischer returned to America and wrote this account of his gradual disillusionment with Stalin's regime. The book betrays the bitter emotions of a man who has staked all that he has on a cause only to believe it betrayed and defeated. Fischer does not allow his misery about the disgrace or execution of so many of those whom he most respected in Russia to colour his general picture of Soviet achievement during the fourteen years of his life there. But the net effect of the book is to produce a loathing of secret police rule and a most serious criticism of Stalin. Those who are interested in the mystery of the confessions will find Fischer's analysis of the Moscow Trials of absorbing interest. His theory that those who confessed were induced to do so by a one-per-cent. hope that they would not be shot is supported by the fact that, as he points out, those who did not confess were shot without trial, and that a very small percentage of those who did confess were reprieved from death. I see no reason, however, to follow him into the further assumption that others who were sentenced to death may in fact still be alive somewhere in Siberia, and I cannot but believe that if Fischer had written this book, not when the U.S.S.R. was benevolently neutral to Hitler but when we are all rejoicing in the success of its resistance to Hitler, he would have changed the emphasis of his criticisms and his judgments on a variety of points. Since Fischer is a man of principle he would have maintained his view that an embryonic Socialist democracy has been crushed in the U.S.S.R. and that hundreds who were loyal citizens and who would have been valuable in this war and to the future of the U.S.S.R. have been uselessly sacrificed. He would have seen no reason to withdraw the obvious deduction from the fact that Yagoda, who as head of the G.P.U. was responsible for these arrests and executions, was himself executed after confessing to the fabrication of evidence and to other corrupt practices. For years Fischer was prepared to swallow much that was cruel and mistaken in the U.S.S.R. in the belief that Stalin was building a Workers' State. When he wrote this book he had ceased to believe that Stalin was doing anything of the kind. If he had been writing to-day he would have been compelled to ask other questions that pressed less hard in 1940. The efficiency of the Russian army seems not to have been impaired by the purges; the real danger of a Fifth Column has been met by the simple process of deciding that all opposition, honest or dishonest, amounted, in view of the threat to Russia, to treachery. Fischer has not asked long distance philosophic questions about Russia; he simply feels and says that mass execution is in itself horrible whatever its results.

The section which Fischer added for the British edition after war had begun between Russia and Germany is necessarily lame, while the conclusion summarising his hopes for the future is bankrupt of any constructive conception except the closer union of America and Britain. Disappointment with Communism and fervent individualism have brought Fischer back to a political position not easily distinguishable from that of any "liberal imperialist" in Britain or the U.S.A. It is a pity that Fischer could not allow a year or two more to pass before he wrote this book and that he felt impelled to end it with a constructive conclusion. The new synthesis which he is looking for is not yet in sight.

I have spoken so far as if this book was almost entirely about Russia. This is not the case. In the course of these years in which Moscow was his basis, Fischer travelled to most European countries, interviewed the prominent people of many States, and made many shrewd observations on each. He was in England when the war broke out in 1939. But above all he was in Spain. The Spanish War, not the Moscow purges, is the climax of this book and its hero is the Spanish Republic. Fischer was a member of the International Brigade, and was assigned the difficult task of supplying it with uniforms and food and all the other necessities that come through a quartermaster's office. From behind the scenes he saw the political struggle which never ceases in war, and he emerged the loyal admirer of Negrin and del Vayo. There are many others of this generation whose faith and hope was staked in Spain and buried with it. Here was the test issue of the democrat. The fight for freedom, political, social and economic, without the awkward complications of imperialist ambitions and with the welcome alliance, but not the domination, of the Comintern. The doubts which a man like Fischer necessarily felt in the Moscow of 1937 disappeared in the heroic crusade of Spanish democracy.

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WOMAN POETS

To-morrow is a Revealing. By LILIAN BOWES-LYON. *Cape.* 3s. 6d.
Selected Poems. By V. SACKVILLE-WEST. *Hogarth Press.* 2s. 6d.
A Dream Observed. By ANNE RIDLER. *Poetry, 25, Marchmont Street.* 1s.

In the controversies which rage round modern poetry, very little is heard of women writers. Yet there are a few women writing poetry which deserves attention. Besides Anne Ridler, V. Sackville-West, and Lilian Bowes-Lyon—here under review—all of whom have previously produced books, there are K. J. Raine and E. J. Scovell, each remarkable in her way, who should certainly find publishers.

K. J. Raine, E. J. Scovell, Lilian Bowes-Lyon and Anne Ridler, all share some quality in common, though their work is very different. Miss Sackville-West, with a more robust and also a more obviously literary talent, stands apart. What the younger writers share is, perhaps, an absorption—more or less conscious—in the task of writing the kind of poetry which women are peculiarly able to write. This poetry often expresses a feminine reflection of experience. But the reader of E. J. Scovell and Anne Ridler would notice that besides being about the woman's side of marriage and having children, many of their poems have an intensity of contemplation, an eye more fixed on the object, than does the poetry of men.

Men have their eyes fixed on several things at once—the form of the poem, the effect of the poem on the reader, their own personalities—where women tend to focus their gaze entirely on what the poem is about. Women do not care for words for their own sake; the pattern of rhythm and metre is less important to them than the experiences which wring poetry out of their lives, so their effects tend to be blurred. Their words are not used for their own sake, but for the sake of the experience which they label, they tend to use weak metrical patterns, or else they are liable to technical lapses. This is true even of writers as powerful as Emily Brontë, Emily Dickinson and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Lilian Bowes-Lyon is a sincere and thoughtful poet, and by no means an easy one. Her poems suffer from being wrapt round in a mist of words such as "nebulous," "infinity," "gossamer," which make them difficult to grasp. She uses too many abstract words and too many adjectives and qualifying phrases to produce a simple and concrete result in most of her poems. However, where her poems succeed, as here in "Two Grey Horses" and "Thin Air Your Providence," a clear, though rarefied, vision rewards the reader. She is a difficult poet to quote as her poems only come off when they are whole and complete experiences, they do not strike off lines and phrases memorable in themselves. But she is a sincere, sensitive and sometimes beautiful writer, feeling her way painfully amongst words as amongst boulders. One day her poetry, stripped of vagueness and redundancies, may have gaunt strength.

Miss Sackville-West's poems will be well known to many readers. This selection includes "Sissinghurst" (quite her best poem), selections from "The Land," and many other poems. There are several new ones. "December Night" has a good photographic description of a dog-fox in it;

> Look from the window: you can see him pass
> On slinky pads across the brittle grass.
> Each blade stands up to sparkle in the moon,
> Hoar with the frost, as bright as splintered glass,
> Casting a pencil shadow, tiny mark
> Of singularity.

Anne Ridler's poems are charming meditations on Christian themes, mostly, in this volume, on marriage and the birth of a child. They are traditional religious poetry, within a carefully constructed modern setting. The effect is always fresh and surprising, if not wonderful and terrifying. For Miss Ridler's work represents very well a graceful, moving, sincere, tidy—yet to my mind not altogether convincing—brand of Christianity. There are few terrors, agonies and bloody sweats here. Such ecstasies as there are are domestic; the electric cooker in a mannerly Church-going household hotting up daddy's lunch and drying baby's panties, after a nice quiet day in which one is just suitably aware of the wicked bombers zooming overhead.

> And though the planes rove through our skies
> Constantly, moving like jealous eyes
> Over our house, and serve to warn
> Us to expect the locust soon;
> These, while they make our luck seem stranger,
> Make us thank God, and bless this summer
> Whose honey shall outlast war and winter.

This is the old "honey still for tea" theme warmed up and surrounded with an electric halo. Actually, although there is something I find slightly smug about Miss Ridler's view of life, I also find it sympathetic, and read her very delicately perceived and clearly traced poems with great pleasure. It would also be quite wrong to give the impression that her intellectual approach to Christianity is superficial: on the contrary, it is thoughtful, reasoned, and in its quiet way capable of producing genuine poetry:

> Heaven revolves, distant, perfect,
> Placid and impregnable as in a Collect;
> And we walk in a waste of snows,
> Yet see that power before our eyes
> Which if we learn its usage can
> Break up the amber, reverse the sun . . .

So having had my gibe at Miss Ridler, I hasten to pay her my respects. Reading her poems, I feel both strongly; respect and the inclination to gibe. Also, there is, thank goodness, something of the formidable primal woman about Miss Ridler which is not without its elemental terrors. It is difficult sometimes to tell whether her poems are about her husband or her baby: both merge into one, and there is a glimpse of the eternal matriarch casting her spells around her, looking down at the "curling head" which may be her husband and may be her week-old son. Altogether the interest of reading poems by women is today too little appreciated and discussed. It is time we became more conscious of our woman poets.

STEPHEN SPENDER

DODGING REALITY

The Pool of Memory. By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM. *Hodder & Stoughton.* 12s. 6d.

This interesting autobiography raises some puzzling questions. You can read it quite profitably for pleasure without asking them, for Mr. Oppenheim is a skilled, professional writer, has had an "interesting" and successful life, has known all the right people and some of the wrong ones, can tell a story standing on his head, so that the reader who merely wants entertainment and has acquired the habit of finding it in the narcotic of one book every week from a circulating library will not go wrong if he puts down Mr. Oppenheim on his next list. But there are other ways of reading books besides that of using them as narcotics with which to dodge reality, and people who fish as sincerely and competently in the pool of their memory as does Mr. Oppenheim often provide curious food for thought as well as for amusement. The reader who is interested in the distressing antics of the human mind and the strange patterns in human society can also be recommended to spend an hour or two fishing with Mr. Oppenheim in the pool of his memory.

Mr. Oppenheim, as every one knows, is one of the best best sellers. His kingdom is the "thriller." Escape and escapism are to-day among the most popular words in the jargon of pseudoscientific, popular psychology. But, though many states of mind are quite wrongly damned as escapism or wishful thinking, there is a psychological state, conditioned by an unconscious or perhaps sometimes conscious desire to dodge reality, to which the terms can be accurately applied. And there can be little doubt that the reading of thrillers is more often than not a method of dodging reality. The reader is transported from the dull round of office, tube, bus, and stale domesticity to a world of thrills and frills, crooks, beautiful and passionate women, strong men and heroes, just the right mixture of violence, crime, sex, and nobility. Reading Mr. Oppenheim, the little man, drab, timid, disappointed, has the satisfaction of safely living dangerously.

Apparently the world of the thriller really exists. At any rate it continually breaks through into the pages of Mr. Oppenheim's reminiscences. Every now and again, though the framework of his life seems to be that which we all know, mainly composed of cocktails, work, dinner parties, more dinner parties, more

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JONATHAN CAPE

cocktails, golf and more golf, suddenly all the cocktails, dinner parties and golf are melted into air, into thin air, and we find Mr. Oppenheim living for a brief glimpse or moment an Oppenheim novel. "The only murder I actually witnessed in my life was outside this same place three nights later," he says in one place as coolly as you or I might say: "The only time I ever won a sweepstake was . . ." But the murders, suicides, mysterious swimmers which he takes in his stride and in the ordinary day's work are not the most interesting evidence of the thriller world in which he lives. Mr. Oppenheim is rich, hospitable, and famous, and has lived for many years in beautiful villas in the south of France in the exotic, international world of the Riviera and the Casino. He has been intimate with all the best people of that vanished world, the tennis playing kings, the Lords and Ladies, the Counts and Barons, the famous authors and the beautiful ladies whose photographs one used to study nervously in the illustrated paper on the table in the dentist's waiting room. These people throng Mr. Oppenheim's pages; the pattern of their life seems, as one reads his book superficially, to have been the pattern of his life. And as one reads, one cannot help feeling that even in this life, composed almost entirely of cocktails, roulette, dinner parties, and golf, the pattern is that of the life of the thriller. Every man is brilliant in conversation, clever, charming; every woman is beautiful. The names are given, and the reader who has occasionally caught a glimpse of this world and its inhabitants becomes a trifle uneasy. Mr. James Douglas is "the most human, perhaps, of all our great literary journalists." Conan Doyle is "the greatest of all masters in the art of writing short stories." The adjective "beautiful" is applied to a lady whom one happens to know, and to know as one of the plainest of God's creatures. Mr. Oppenheim—the conviction gradually steals over one—is himself dodging reality.

The interesting thing is that at the same time he isn't. Every now and then behind all this glamour and optimism you catch a glimpse of another Mr. Oppenheim, a pessimist, tongue-tied, taciturn, with his eyes wide open. One regrets that Mr. Oppenheim has not allowed us to see more of him. And then in the last few chapters an interesting thing happens which directs our attention, not merely to Mr. Oppenheim's psychology, but to the pattern of that Riviera society of which it formed a part. The pattern is brutally destroyed, the society broken up, by reality in the shape of a war. The reactions of that society and of Mr. Oppenheim, and his account of the journey as he struggled back to England are well worth studying. Space forbids that we should record our reflections—except one, namely that the immense importance of cocktails abides with us to the end.

LEONARD WOOLF

THE MASTER

The Life and Opinions of Walter Richard Sickert. By ROBERT EMMONS. *Faber.* 25s.

Dr. Emmons, who owns many of Sickert's finest pictures and has also been his pupil, wrote this book, he tells us, with three objects: to present in more permanent form Sickert's random contributions to the literature of criticism, to outline the main events of his life, and to supply the kind of text-book of drawing and painting that might be inferred from his teaching and practice. Those who expect him to have Boswellised the master will be disappointed, and lavish as are the quotations from Sickert's writings, they leave us wishing for a complete collection. But the book fulfils its purposes, and contains a number of excellent plates. The reproductions in the text of etchings and pen-and-ink drawings are, however, calumnious, and excusable only by wartime difficulties.

Despite the author's evident enthusiasm for his subject, he has deliberately abstained as far as possible from criticism of Sickert's works. Unluckily he has not been similarly discreet in the criticism of other artists. It would be easy to compile a *sottisier* of the pronouncements of great artists about art, and Sickert has in this respect been as silly as any. He could appreciate the excellent Greaves, but was insulting about the prodigious Douanier; he had good words for the pictures of Farquharson and Sir Frank Salisbury, but declared that Picassos and Matisses could be painted by coachmen. Dr. Emmons feels a call to talk in the same vein: Post-Impressionism is a racket, in which, it appears, the critics have conspired with the dealers to gull the public. Dr. Emmons should remember that those of us who are most enthusiastic for Picasso and Matisse are also usually most enthusiastic for Sickert. If we are so grossly deceived, or deceiving, about the foreigners, is it not probable that we are equally wrong about the Englishman? Such imputations do a very poor service to Dr. Emmons' hero.

Like many artists, Sickert has inclined in his criticism to make general rules out of the exigencies of his own temperament. Because he does not like painting out of doors, *plein-air* painting is denounced; because he does not like painting nude models, nude models must not be painted. On occasion in his wilfulness he has even made generalisations that condemn his own work. The main intention of artistic utility, we are told, is the decoration of rooms—but does not the low key in which he has usually painted make his own productions commonly unsuitable for this purpose? Painting, he has proclaimed, should come to an understanding with the plain man to furnish some obvious requirements. But in my experience Sickert is one of the painters in whom it is most difficult to get the plain man interested. Refinement in handling and the enveloping beauty of tone are the last things the plain man can get the hang of—he far more easily sees the point of an abstraction. But, as Sickert says, a painter must be judged by his canvases, and not by his patter.

Of course, his "patter" is usually witty and often enlightening, nor has there been another teacher in his time so great.

> Nature having the range of all colours, plus the range from light to shade, can set this double range against the painter's single range of colours in a uniform light. So the great painters of the world have in their traditional cunning hit upon the plan of attenuating, as they cannot but do, the light and shade of their pictures, and paying us back by drenching each tone with as much of the wine of colour as it will hold, without contradicting the light and shade.
>
> The less a man is a painter the more he is obliged to supplement the theoretically ideal course . . . . by what painters call "accents," that is to say, emphasised markings, which rather arrest than extend the intimate deployment of form.

Such quotations admirably define his own practice. He successively learnt from Whistler and Degas—he paid tribute also to the influences of Wilson Steer and of a painter whose performance is still too generally underrated, Spencer Gore. From Spencer Gore rather than directly from Pissarro he learnt to make of canvas "an opaque mosaic." Dr. Emmons well describes the result:

> If you look at one of his pictures closely . . . . you will get an effect as of looking down through a clear sea, in which, at different levels, coloured fronds, corals and stretches of bright sand alternate, and reflect, and gleam, and seem to move.

Mr. Clive Bell recently made in these columns the interesting suggestion that Sickert learnt from the Venetians rather than from the Impressionists. The only Old Masters mentioned as influences by Dr. Emmons are Rembrandt and Vermeer, and the only reference in this book to the Venetian School is not that of a disciple: "We aim at and achieve totally different results, results they neither dreamt o nor could compass." But this was written during his first visit, and before he had found his own style. The other visits may have opened his eyes. Dr. Emmons, while admitting that Sickert is not a great inventor, seems to suggest that he is a more lonely figure than I take him to be. Beside his Camden Town friends, Bonnard and Vuillard require to be considered, not because they influenced him, but because they departed from similar points upon not dissimilar roads. Sickert might indeed be roughly classified as an *intimiste* with a preference for subjects that are "realistic" in the sense of being sordid. But the thing is not to classify, it is to enjoy—and Sickert, if an acquired taste, is a taste infinitely well worth acquiring. He was a professional actor before

Today's Bright Thought

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JONATHAN CAPE

he became a painter, and he has retained a delighted interest in character ane situation. But if his inspiration and intentions have often been dramatic, the usual results are almost purely pictorial. The hand has taken charge, and the "idea" is submerged in the beauty of its treatment. The true nature of his genius is hinted in a story he told about a figure in Delacroix. Did it represent a man's back or his front, the greatest and most faithful of the master's admirers was summoned to decide. To which the enthusiast: "Monsieur, ce n'est ni l'un ni l'autre. C'est de la *peinture*. RAYMOND MORTIMER

BLITZKRIEG ANALYSED

Blitzkrieg. By F. O. MIKSCHE. Introduction by TOM WINTRINGHAM. *Faber and Faber.* 12s. 6d.

The author, formerly an officer in the Czech Army, served in the International Brigade, and he traces the development of the German technique of attack from its experimental stage in Spain to the finished article in France. He shows that ultimately the potentialities of the internal combustion engine were exploited to the fullest extent in the combined action of the mechanised vehicle of various types and the aeroplane. Concentration of hitting power, and, above all, speed were the secret of German triumphs in the Battle of France.

At first the diagrams and somewhat complicated graphs suggest that the book is of interest only to soldiers and airmen, to whom it must surely be of the greatest interest, because it explains for the first time just how instantaneous success was achieved, in the first instance on the Meuse, and then repeated on the Somme, and, indeed, for this reason it can be recommended to civilian readers wishing to know how it was done.

In the later chapters the author develops his own ideas regarding the tactics of both attack and defence under *blitzkrieg* conditions. As to these, only the professional soldier who has made a special study of the subject would be qualified to express opinions, but it can hardly be doubted that they are constructive and helpful.

Taken as a whole, the book provides an invaluable commentary on the strategy of challenging Hitler with another B.E.F. landed in Western Europe, if and when that shall become possible for it shows clearly the extent to which mass mechanised warfare depends on General and Administrative Staff work in every grade being carried to the very highest pitch of efficiency. One wonders how his school of thought satisfies itself that our staffs, depending as needs they must on what are virtually peace-time manoeuvres, can ever hope to rival German staffs, which have already had the benefit of practical war training in no less than seven campaigns (not counting Spain), of which the most recent equals in magnitude all the others put together.

Tom Wintringham contributes a racy and informative Introduction to a book written with verve and a deep comprehension of its subject. CLIVE GARSIA

GENETICS

Medicine and Mankind. By ARNOLD SORSBY. *Faber and Faber.* 12s. 6d.

In biological theorising, heredity and environment are no longer the discrete influences they were. Dr. Sorsby, in this brilliant and important book, provides a corrective for any surviving old-fashioned eugenists of the "sterilise the social failures" school. He reminds us that both experience and experiment have conclusively shown that environment, as well as heredity, may influence not only health and longevity, but also actual physical capacity and mental ability. A sort of neo-Lamarckism seems to have established itself. "The excess of morbidity and mortality in the poor as a mass is not due to mystical causes, like 'poor stock'." As Dr. Sorsby points out, faulty nutrition and overcrowding will induce in a herd of experimental animals the disease phenomena reflected by human statistics. "Respiratory affections can be made rampant in a rat colony by feeding which corresponds to the unbalanced diets of the poor." Those interested in these things are familiar with the figures which show the direct and proportionate association of numerous diseases with poverty and overcrowding. Equally significant is the comparison of morbidity and mortality figures before and after the materialisation of economic, nutritional and other hygienic reforms. Twenty years ago the mortality rate for men classed as unskilled labourers was 48 per cent. higher than the rate which obtained in the well-to-do and professional classes; ten years later this excess had declined by half. Similar figures are yielded by a comparison of the rural and urban death rates in the corresponding periods. By the application of new knowledge to environmental circumstance, we have brought the mortality rates of town and country, poor and rich, much nearer to one another. We are, in increasing measure, becoming masters of our environment, slow as we are in applying our knowledge.

The figures of occupational mortality and morbidity are interesting. Even in the most favoured social class the mortality rate of doctors is 40 per cent. higher than that of bank officials; whilst in wool-spinning, work like carding carries a mortality 48 per cent. higher than does spinning itself. Whilst Factory Acts have done much to lessen isolated industrial dangers they have not produced any radical solution. As Dr. Sorsby says:

> Whenever any reform is mooted there are a hundred and one reasons why the particular industry cannot afford it. The history of factory legislation shows that of its own volition industry can never afford any change; it could not afford limiting the work of children in mines and factories to twelve hours a day; it could not afford any restriction of the hours of work of adults; it could not afford sanitary measures; it can never afford safety devices.

Equally significant are the figures quoted showing the social character of much of the mortality and morbidity among our subject races in tropical countries. "Malnutrition is the rule, hunger not uncommon, and famine is always a threatening shadow." As for the present, and the immediate future, Dr. Sorsby is, perhaps, unduly pessimistic.

> The standard of living is no longer rising and there is no faith in the continuous and automatic improvement of things. Poverty—which is still the lot of all but a tiny fraction of mankind as a whole—has become but one aspect of an acute and widespread social disorder . . . In the seas of social pestilence there are no Isles of the Blest, only Lotus Lands.

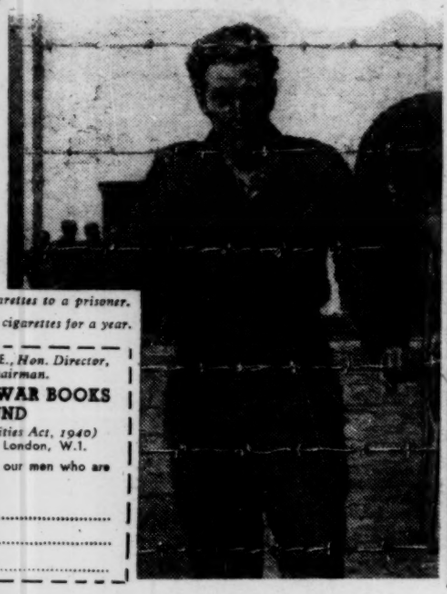
In his final chapter, however, the author takes a more hopeful view of the ultimate prospects of man. Reverting to the fact that the gene, as the basis of hereditary transmission, is shown not to be a rigid building stone, changeless and immutable, but subject to the determining action of environment, he has visions of the time when man, "gaining knowledge of his building clay, will learn the secret of the evolution of a race of gods." So may it be.

HARRY ROBERTS

Housman, 1897-1936. By GRANT RICHARDS. *Oxford Press.* 21s.

Mr. Grant Richards was for many years Housman's publisher, and his book will be valuable to bibliographers. His friendship with the scholar-poet was cemented by a common interest in food and wine, in pursuit of which they made together agreeable tours in France. The letters from Housman quoted are for the most part upon trivial subjects, but they give a picture of his donnish fussiness, his unsmiling humour, and his immense preoccupation with his palate. An eccentric, in fact, in the best tradition of our Universities. Mr. Richards, who could have written a pregnant short work about Housman, has preferred to write a tumid long one, which can be recommended only to the most enthusiastic. Just as Sir John Murray has sought to acquit Byron of an abnormal interest in his half-sister, Housman's publisher attempts to acquit him of a romantic interest in his own sex. The poet's sister, in an introduction, assures us that he was "singularly free from any amorous attachments," but, it may be thought, sisters are not necessarily absolute authorities on such a subject. Home troubles, a

Behind barbed wire



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failure in an examination and the loss of religious belief, we are told, warped his character: no unhappy personal attachment was expressed in *The Shropshire Lad*. This view will not, we think, convince all readers of Housman—we have similarly been told that Shakespeare's sonnets were a mere literary exercise.

The most valuable section of Mr. Richards's book is a series of appendices, including recollections by Dr. Percy Withers, Professor F. W. Oliver, Professor O. L. Richmond, Sir Sidney Cockerell, and Miss Joan Thompson; and, best of all, notes on Housman's poems by Professor N. B. A. Fletcher. Professor Fletcher provides a fascinating series of quotations revealing Housman's debt to earlier writers, notably Shakespeare, Arnold, Heine, Stevenson and the composers of the Authorised Version. He also cites poems by Johnson, Gray, Kingsley, Darley and other authors that anticipate Housman's style; and he collects the repetitions and favourite poems in Housman's verse. This appendix is the most enlightening article on the poet that has yet appeared.

Week-end Competitions

No. 621

Set by John Mair

The following advertisement appeared in the *Times* recently: "THIS AUTHOR LIVED IN A 'PADDED CELL.' Proust, famous French novelist, in his desire for silence lined with cushions the walls of his apartment on the Boulevard Haussmann. That no doubt was hyper-sensitiveness; but there *are* business men who complain of their noisy offices—there *are* flat residents who hear more than they like to of their neighbours . . ." and went on to recommend a patent wall-board.

The usual prizes are offered for a similarly enterprising advertisement of Mouthwash; Chewing-gum; Egg-substitute; Box-divans; Brilliantine; Health Salts; or Breakfast Cereal. Any suitable author may be employed, but a choice showing the boldness and culture of the sample is recommended.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, January 12th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 618

Set by G. B. Dodington

A First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea are offered for the best sets of three questions to the B.B.C. "Brains Trust."

Report by G. B. Dodington

Many questions submitted even I could instantly answer, many others are unanswerable, and a few are painfully personal, such as inquiries why one member of the Trust talks so much more than his colleagues. Sir Robert Witt suggests: "Why were *you* selected as a Brains Trust?" and "when do the best competitors win Week-end Competitions?" (The answer to the latter, if decided by voting, must presumably be "Never," since there are hundreds each week who must find the award a disappointment.) George More, age 14, offers a friendlier form of personal question: "What colour are the curtains in the dining-room of every person present?" I have ruthlessly discarded a large number of such questions as, "Is the conflict between Science and Religion irreconcilable"? because they do not lend themselves to short discussion. I have also discarded questions that are merely semantic, such as Guy Innes's "Assuming that God is omnipotent, could He make a mountain so heavy that He could not lift it?" I append a selection of entries, well aware that some of them will, to some readers, appear too easily answered. I recommend that the first prize go to G. E. Copeman, the second to Towanbucket.

Why is it that, although there are more labour-saving devices in the world than ever before, life is more hurried than ever before?
(Signalman Pritchard)

Cats hate water and yet are fond of fish, which they cannot catch themselves. How did they acquire this "unnatural" taste, and is it in any way an exceptional instance? (H. Meredith)

Is aptitude necessarily the result of inherited instinct? (W. S. Craddock)

Why does the British public, on the whole, show so much less enthusiasm for opera than most other European peoples? (G. E. Copeman)

Does the Brains Trust think that if Britain had allowed Napoleon to consolidate his new order, the world would by now have become a better place than it is to-day? It obviously could not be much worse. (Mrs. M. H. Gross)

Has it been scientifically proved that the dreams we remember occur only at the instant of waking?
(S. W. G.)

Who among the great authors wrote the greatest number of words? (Mrs. Simpson)

What has contributed most to the decadence of taste in modern life as is seen in the incessant radio programmes of "light music" and entertainment and the escapism provided by the cinema: (*a*) the apathy of the people, (*b*) the system of education, (*c*) a system of seeking large profits by exploiting the weaknesses of human nature?
(Francis B. Dutton)

What are the chief factors which induce a return to consciousness after normal, healthy sleep, and can they be varied so as to achieve an economy of the daily time necessary for a full restoration of energies. (D. M. Harry)

Maps have always had a looking-north aspect. Have the affairs of mankind been influenced in any way by this? (Richard Pomfret)

How far do mammals prefer one individual of their species to another when mating. (C. B.)

Cold water, being heavier than warm and always sinking to the bottom, *why*, at or about 32 deg. Fahrenheit (or 0 deg. Centrigrade or Reaumur) does it suddenly come to the top and become ice?
(William Bliss)

What would each member of the Brains Trust do if told that they had six months to live?
(Miss M. Murray)

Why do people yawn, and why is yawning so infectious? (F. J. H. Grant)

Please suggest three well-known persons each as resident experts to succeed you on the Brains Trust, with reasons for your choice. (S. E. Fry)

FIRST PRIZE

I

1. "A" is honest, kind-hearted and in every way dependable, but has the knack of rubbing people up the wrong way and setting the human barometer at "stormy." "B" is dishonest and morally unreliable, but has "charm," and makes everyone feel happier for meeting him.

Which is the really anti-social character?

"B" is nearly always popular. Does the B.T. back up this vote?

2. Why do we smile when pleased and frown when displeased?

3. Why does a child born with dark hair so often get its first permanent crop (about 6 months old) very light, gradually darkening till only at maturity is the original dark colour reached?

G. E. COPEMAN

SECOND PRIZE

1. Is there an ascertainable bursting strain of the human brain? If so, when may we expect Joad to explode?

2. Is the Brains Trust erudition equal to an agreed definition (so far unaccountably missed) of what is meant by a scientist?

3. Why does the average sailor's credulity (not to mention his garrulity) so much exceed what the Creator planned for men on land?

1. Why do people pray?
2. Is there a recipe for a best-selling novel?
3. Can music be immoral? TOWANBUCKET

Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas)

THE 16th Ordinary General Meeting of shareholders of Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) was held on Monday at 29 Gracechurch Street, London, E.C.

Sir John Caulcutt, K.C.M.G. (the chairman) who presided, said that the statement which had been issued, with the report and balance sheet, to the shareholders and to the Press, would take the place of the customary speech. (The statement was reproduced in our columns on December 20th last.) In it he had dealt with the affairs of the Bank for the year ended September 30th, 1941, and the proceedings would be confined to voting on the necessary resolutions and to any comments which shareholders might desire to make.

He then moved the adoption of the report of directors and the statement of accounts and the payment of a final dividend of 4 per cent. actual on the 8 per cent. Cumulative Preference shares and of 3½ per cent. actual on the "A" and "B" shares. The motion was seconded by Mr. A. B. Gillett and carried unanimously.

The resolution authorising the conversion into stock, on the 1st January, 1942, of the 8% Cumulative Preference shares and the fully paid "A" shares was also carried unanimously.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Essendon, Sir Harold Edward Snagge, K.B.E., and Mr. William Macnamara Goodenough, were re-elected directors.

On the motion of the Rt. Hon. Lord Ebbisham, G.B.E., seconded by Mr. W. G. Haill and supported by Mr. Joseph Nissim, Messrs. Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths and Co.; Price, Waterhouse and Co.; Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co., and Cooper Brothers and Co., were reappointed auditors.

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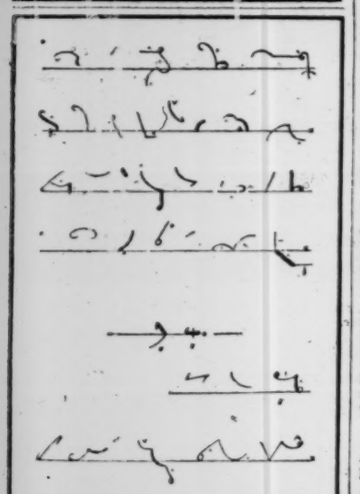

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Entertainments

ALLIES Ball, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Saturday, December 27th, 6.30. Russian, Chinese, British and American cabaret. Al Tabor's Band by permission of Murray's Club. Tickets 3s. 6d., Russia To-day, 150 Southampton Row, or bookshops.

Lectures, Meetings & Exhibitions

ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, W.2. December 28th, at 11.30, R. O. Prowse: "Fighting the Future."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Sunday Meetings, 11 a.m. December 28th. No Meeting.

ASSOCIATION of Jewish Refugees. Meeting, Tuck Hall, Woburn House, Upper Woburn Place, London, W.C.1., Dec. 28th. Mr. A. P. Michaelis: "Programme and Work of the Association." Discussion, 11 a.m.

BERKELEY Galleries, exhibiting Contemporary Artists and Chinese Antiques, 20 Davies St., W.1. 10–4; also Sats. Admis. free.

LANGFORD Grove Christmas Pictures are on sale at The Challenge, S.P.C.K. House, 9 Northumberland Avenue, W.C.2. Half proceeds to go to Aid to Russia Fund.

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